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# The Effects of Hands-on Literacy Activities and Strategies to Support the Literacy Development of a Student with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

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The Effects of Hands-on Literacy Activities and Strategies to Support the Literacy  
Development of a Student with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

By

Katrina Durnberg

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A thesis submitted to the  
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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

Students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have been receiving special attention in the field of education in the more recent years. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) will be used to describe the specific learning disability diagnosis given to Katie, the student participating in the research study (Alloway, Gathercole, & Elliot, 2010). This attention is due to the alarming percentages of students receiving diagnoses of ADHD. School age children that experience difficulty in sustained attention comprise almost five percent of the student population. (*Identifying and Treating Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Resource for School and Home*, 2003). Students experiencing hyperactivity and impulsivity, along with students lacking in sustained attention, are all considered under the diagnosis of ADHD. Studies have determined the clear differences between these two types of Attention Deficit, however the common terminology has remained (Goth-Owens, Martinez-Torteya, Martel, & Nigg, 2010).

This past school year, I worked with a variety of students with ADHD. Each student was unique with his or her strengths and needs in association with the diagnosis. Some of these students were taking medication, some were classified in their IEP (individualized education plans) and others were merely under speculation of this condition. In my experiences dealing with students with ADHD, I discovered that getting to know the student was the most important first step in supporting the educational needs of the student. I also noticed the all too frequent observation of not enough support for these students to become successful in the classroom. I suspect that teachers can become easily overwhelmed attending to the needs of the diverse range of students. It is not surprising that students with ADHD may require a little extra attention and support. I understand the struggle to meet the needs of every student, however I believe that some of the support systems that can be put in place for students with ADHD can also support students that are not diagnosed with this condition. To

support the needs of their ADHD students, teachers can choose lessons and activities that are supportive for all types of learners, and therefore limiting the need to modify every lesson or activity. I am familiar with the symptoms and the diagnosis process of ADHD, along with the behavioral strategies often implemented to keep students focused and on track while reading. The symptoms I have seen in the classroom most frequently are; students have difficulty organizing tasks and activities, students lose necessary items for tasks or activities and/or are often unprepared, and students are easily distracted by extraneous stimuli. In order to combat some of these symptoms, I have observed teachers providing Velcro or stress balls to stimulate the student to support in their ability to focus. The student's prospective is an important indicator of the student's predetermined success. The student should be involved in their learning, and be given the responsibility of awareness. If the student is involved in the process of understanding their needs as a learner, the teacher is better able to support the student's needs, and that student has a better chance for success in the classroom. As a teacher I need to determine how easily overwhelmed literacy assignments can be for a specific student, and how frustrating long passages or writing assignments can be as well.

In this study, I investigated my use of hands-on literacy activities and strategies, and how they created a more engaging literacy experience for a student with ADHD. For the purpose of this study, I used the term "hands-on" is used to describe an activity that requires manipulation or stimulation other than that of the tradition reading of a text, along with this manipulation the student is required to analyze the textual information more critically based on the task given (Gerstner, & Bogner, 2010). This opportunity to research this topic more efficiently, and bring my research to the classroom, has supported my work with students and my teaching capabilities immensely.



## **Research Questions**

The main topic of this study was centered around how the use of hands-on learning activities contributes to the literacy development of a student with ADHD. For this examination, I researched the questions:

- How does the hands-on approach affect a student's motivation during literacy learning?
- How does the hands-on approach affect a student's reading comprehension during literacy learning?
- How does the hands-on approach affect a student's ability to decode during literacy learning?

## **Rationale**

The rationale for this study was to research the effectiveness the use of hands-on learning in literacy-related activities can have on a student with ADHD. I reviewed three specific aspects of literacy learning as a notation of successfulness in the area of hands-on learning. Motivation was one area I analyzed as a determining source of understanding and contribution to the area of literacy. Students with ADHD are likely to lack motivation as a symptom of their disorder (Volkow, Wang, Newcorn, Kollins, Wigal, et al., 2011).

Motivation is necessary to compensate for the student's lack of focus and attention given to the reading tasks. The allowance of hands-on activities while performing related literacy assignments, specifically in the area of reading, can contribute to the student's enthusiasm to perform adequately and successfully in an attempt to ensure the probability of participating in a similar task in the future. I analyzed the aspect of this source of inspiration for Katie as a contributing factor to the overall extension of Katie's abilities in reading.

I believe that reading comprehension of textual information supports a student's ability to gain an adequate amount of knowledge from the text while reading. Reading comprehension is defined by the ability to use multiple sources of information to determine an overall understanding of textual information (Ghelani, Sidhu, Jain, & Tannock, 2004). This ability is imperative to the student's achievement level with text-based questions and related assignments. In order for reading comprehension to be successful, a student must use a system of strategic actions for processing written texts (Fountas, & Pinnell, 2009). The hands-on approach can give students the much needed support to focus attention on the text, and perform the necessary strategic actions. An example of a hands-on activity that could promote reading comprehension, a student reads a text that is broken into small sections, then write the most important information in each section on a post-it note, this post-it note can then be placed into the text where the important information was found. This hands-on activity allows students to focus on smaller chunks of information. This activity also supports the working memory through writing down the information and placing the post-it note where the information was found in the text. When the working memory is activated, students with ADHD can have better reading comprehension (Alloway, Gathercole, & Elliott, 2010). When students practice the hands-on strategy, like the use of post-it notes to record important information, their abilities to obtain more specific data and related information will be determined, as their working memory of the textual information should improve. Often, the ability to make inferences while reading is legitimately difficult for students with ADHD, and the comprehension support in textual information can be extremely accommodating for these students.

The ability to decode allows the reader to translate the text into graphemes and phonemes that support the comprehension of the textual information by way of defining responsive words and phrases (Cummings, Dewey, Latimer, & Good, 2011). Students with

ADHD often struggle with decoding while reading. Creating a hands-on approach to decoding will allow these students to expedite their inherent capabilities with interaction and physical stimulation. The ability to decode is an essential tool in supporting reading comprehension.

Each area depicted by the respective research questions gave me deeper understanding to the overall significance of a hands-on approach to literacy learning. The subject of the research study was in accordance with students with ADHD, and their successfulness in relation to the components of motivation, comprehension, and decoding. I analyzed and correlated the results to determine actual significance and impact related to the schema of literacy intervention.

### **Definitions**

I used the following terms throughout this study. These definitions will clarify their usage within this context.

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) will be used to describe the specific learning disability diagnosis given to Katie, the student participating in the research study. Further understanding of the limitations associated with a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder will be discussed in the literature review (Alloway, Gathercole, & Elliot, 2010).
- Hands-on approach will be used to describe the type of literacy learning strategy used with Katie in the research study. This approach will be further defined in the literature review, and gave mention to throughout the entirety of the research study (Gerstner, & Bogner, 2010).
- Reading comprehension is defined by the ability to use multiple sources of information to determine an overall understanding of textual information. Reading

comprehension will be mentioned in the following chapters of this research study, as well as further specifically defined in the literature review (Ghelani, Sidhu, Jain, & Tannock, 2004).

- Decoding refers to the ability to translate text into graphemes and phonemes in order to support a reader's comprehension of the text. Decoding and the related terms will be discussed throughout the research study, and defined more specifically in the literature review (Cummings, Dewey, Latimer, & Good, 2011).

### **Study Approach**

I conducted a research study that incorporated the use of relevant literature to support my development of lessons involving hands-on opportunities in reading and their effects on motivation, reading comprehension and decoding capabilities. This entitled me to be referred to as the teacher researcher. I used existing theories to support my hypothesis and used reflection throughout to determine the stability of my hypothesis. The process of obtaining my information was instructive. I produced 20-30 minute hands-on reading lessons for my student, who will be referred to as Katie (a pseudonym), and conducted them over a four week time period. We met twice a week during the four weeks for a total of eight sessions with Katie. The research methods supported my analysis of qualitative observations and a quantitative analysis of assessments. The qualitative observations involved an analytical reflection involving the motivation, reading comprehension, and decoding capabilities of Katie throughout each prospective session. The quantitative results from the assessments created individually for each of the books used throughout the eight sessions were analyzed accordingly. I incorporated an illustrative research reporting style to enhance the understanding of the research for my audience. I used dialogue from our interactions, and

examples of the Katie's work to help provide a more detailed perspective and background for the implications section of my research study.

### **Organization of Thesis**

In Chapter One, I introduced myself as the teacher researcher and set a purpose for the research study. I purpose I set gave background information necessary to defining the importance of the research questions. I further analyzed the research questions in the rationale section. I recorded and outlined a definition of significant terms to allow the audience a thorough understanding of the research study. I also discussed the approach of the study in regards to methodology. In Chapter Two, I have discoursed and analyzed the literature according to relevance and support of the overarching topic of hands on activities in literacy, and the connection to students with Attention Deficit Disorder. In Chapter Three, I determined and outlined the design of the research study by participants, procedures, and data collection. In Chapter Four, I analyzed and debated the results of the study according to the parameters for which the research study has been created. In Chapter Five, I determined the limitations of the research study and produced my concluding thoughts based on possible implications for this research study.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I gave an overarching perspective on the research study that was conducted. As the teacher researcher, I determined the aspects of the hands-on literacy approach and incorporated them into literacy lessons with a student with Attention Deficit Disorder. I regulated the lessons around the ability of the hands-on strategy to have a positive effect on the Katie's motivation, reading comprehension, and decoding capabilities. This study provided a relevant approach to the understanding the dynamic of this disorder.

Teachers are faced with supporting and instructing students with Attention Deficit Disorder on a more frequent basis and this research study gives a necessary interpretation to further the discussion and understanding of this disability and the effects on literacy interventions. A definition of related terms was incorporated into this chapter, to serve as a reference for those unfamiliar with literacy-related elements. The research study approach was defined to ensure the comprehension of the quantitative and qualitative analysis later on in the research study. Lastly, I anticipate that the organization of the thesis provides the reader with an understanding of the prospective outline and succession of the research study.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

In this chapter I focus on some of the issues related to the literacy education of students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The focus of this chapter highlights the research behind each of my three guiding research questions: How does the hands-on approach affect a student's motivation during literacy learning? How does the hands-on approach affect a student's reading comprehension during literacy learning? How does the hands-on approach affect a student's ability to decode during literacy learning?

In the sections of this chapter I further examine ADHD, how literacy learning can be affected by the areas of motivation, reading comprehension, and decoding, and the effects of modifying literacy instruction for a student with ADHD.

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Defined**

Students have been diagnosed with ADHD at alarming rates in recent years. School age children who experience difficulty in sustained attention comprise almost five percent of the student population (Identifying and Treating Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Resource for School and Home, 2003). ADHD has also become an umbrella term that secures various types of behavioral disorders under one diagnosis, according to the DSM V (2013, Diagnostic & Statistical Manual V). Therefore, students experiencing hyperactivity and impulsivity, along with students lacking in sustained attention, are all considered under the diagnosis of ADHD. Goth-Owens, Martinez-Torteya, Martel, and Nigg, (2010) determined the clear differences between these two types of Attention Deficit however, the common terminology has remained. The disorder is attributed to be inconsistent. The external and internal stimuli that cause such inattentive behaviors can become more or less obtrusive throughout the student's day. Often the focus may lie on other stimuli that are unique to the

student, and could variably impinge upon the student's capabilities in different subject areas. (Aaron, Joshi, & Phipps, 2004).

In their study Paloyelis, Rijdsdijk, Wood, Asherson, and Kuntsi (2010), explored the genetic association between ADHD symptoms and reading difficulties and discovered that a student's IQ is independent from the student's genetic and environmental influences, which are associated with acquiring ADHD. The findings of the study note that although reading requires sustained attention, and multiple focusing strategies and skills, students with ADHD are no more likely than students without it to develop reading disabilities. However, students with ADHD are likely to have reading disabilities contributing from the behavioral level.

The findings from Greven, Harlaar, Dale, and Plomin's (2011) study highlights a strong correlation between ADHD and reading disabilities, and identifies more than enough evidence to support the cohesion of these disabilities. Greven et al. highlight the correlation between genetic dispositions and ADHD. Their overall conclusion was that students with ADHD are likely to struggle in the literacy related areas of reading comprehension, inattention, and word decoding. The researchers resolve that it is overtly important for teachers to establish a system of monitoring and early diagnosis for students who are struggling with reading, and students who are diagnosed with ADHD (Greven, Harlaar, Dale, & Plomin, 2011). Determining the true cause of a student's reading disabilities can be difficult. The more a teacher knows about a student's strengths and weaknesses will support the teacher's ability to determine the student's literacy needs.

### **Motivation**

The success of my research study and the hands-on learning of my student, Katie, will be measured by her motivation and enthusiasm. Motivation will promote the quality of the literacy learning, and become a determining source of contribution to the Katie's



understanding of literacy. I believe that motivation is necessary to compensate for the lack of focus and attention given to the reading tasks. Attention is crucial to the lasting effects of literacy learning and can be manipulated by the involvement and participation of the student (Literacy teaching practice: Participation, 2005). The motivation of Katie will be analyzed as a contributing factor to the overall extension of the Katie's abilities in reading.

Beike and Zentall (2012) studied the potential motivation of students with undiagnosed ADHD and possible reading disabilities. The researchers used what they called "content literacy." This form of literacy strategy uses exaggerated vocabulary and peculiar story endings or plot twists that encourage the reader to become more involved in the story. The researchers' goal was to increase story interest among students with ADHD, and to enable students with reading disorders to persevere beyond their limitations. According to Beike and Zentall (2012), the "major findings were that the beneficial effects of added novelty were significant for both groups of boys with mild disabilities, especially for students at risk of ADHD, relative to the performance of typical learners" (p. 538). The study's finding suggests that it is apparent that in an effort to increase the literacy skills of student's with ADHD, it is important to begin with the motivation of the student.

In their study, Volkow, Wang, Newcorn, Kollins, Wigal, Telang, Fowler, Goldstein, Klein, Logan, Wong, and Swanson, (2011) determined that students with ADHD have less motivation because of a chemical unbalance in the brain. The researchers found that students with ADHD require more positive reinforcement for their behaviors, and stronger incentives to follow behavior and structural guidelines. This inability to maintain motivation may be caused by the dopamine pathway in the brain. The study's results indicate that the deficits in motivation that are caused from specific brain inactivity, directly contribute to the inattention of students with ADHD. Therefore their disorder is not only attention lacking, and/or hyperactive, students are also likely to lack motivation as a symptom of the disorder (Volkow,

Wang, Newcorn, Kollins, Wigal, et al., 2011). This study's findings recognize motivation as a true disability for students with ADHD, and further explain my intention for including the motivational effects of hands-on literacy learning for a student with ADHD. Reading activities that include hands-on learning can contribute to a student's investment to perform effectively and will ensure the student's ability to participate in similar tasks in the future.

### **Reading Comprehension**

A student with ADHD often struggles in the area of reading comprehension (Ghelani, Sidhu, Jain, and Tannock, 2004). It is important to take a more in-depth look into this area of literacy as it supports a student's ability to learn from the text. Reading comprehension of textual information enables the student to gain knowledge from the text, and make meaning while reading. The student's achievement level in school is dependent upon reading comprehension, especially in the area of test taking (Keenan, & Meenan, 2014). With test-based questions, and creating inferences based on text, the area of reading comprehension must be analyzed by teachers and scaffolded for their students with ADHD.

Reading comprehension is often interrelated with the student's working memory of the current text. According to Alloway, Gathercole, and Elliot (2010), "working memory refers to the capacity to store and manipulate information for a brief period" (p 632). In their research study, Alloway et al. analyzed the link between working memory and ADHD and determined that working memory was essential to academic attainment. The researchers also discovered that the attention-lacking behaviors of students with ADHD contributed to their limited working memory. They suggest that early screening to determine a student's working memory could prevent an array of different reading disabilities, including an early diagnosis of ADHD.

Memory is an important component of basic reading comprehension (Elosua, Garcia-

Madruza, Vila, Gomez-Veiga, and Gil, 2013). Elosua et al. (2013) found that, “text comprehension can be improved after specific training on the executive functions involved in working memory (e.g., focusing, switching, connecting, and updating mental representations, and the inhibition of irrelevant information) in Primary school children” (2013, p 5). Students need to be able to focus on the important pieces of information, and keep them in their working memory to combine their gained knowledge and create a deeper understanding of the textual information. Students with ADHD often struggle with this area of reading comprehension, and need scaffolding to support their working memory as they read. Scaffolding to support working memory can be achieved through the use of graphic organizers and note-taking strategies that encourage the summarization and determining of the main idea of a text (Elosua et al., 2013).

Reading comprehension is a complex task that develops and strengthens over time throughout a successful literacy education. Comprehension of textual information is based upon the readers’ ability to understand the complex symbols of text through decoding, and understanding and processing language structures. Ghelani, Sidhu, Jain, and Tannock (2004) analyzed the reading comprehension performance of students with ADHD. There were 19 students with ADHD and reading disabilities, a group of 20 students with reading disabilities, and group of 25 normal control students. The researchers determined that students with ADHD have slower processing speeds than the normal control group, and as a result the students also have a decreased reading rate. Researchers determined that these deficits in students with ADHD could be based on the students’ inability to focus and attend to information. The researchers recommended certain strategies for improving reading comprehension in students with ADHD, specifically, “these strategies include approaches such as: comprehension monitoring; teaching metacognitive skills; providing relevant prior knowledge; using graphic organizers to decrease memory requirements; question answering,

generation, and summarization; and the use of multiple strategies” (Ghelani, Sidhu, Jain, & Tannock, 2004, p. 379). I will use several of these strategies in my research study to further Katie’s ability and analyze the true effects of these strategies on Katie, a student with ADHD.

### **Decoding**

A reader’s ability to decode supports him/her as he/she translate text into graphemes and phonemes. The reader’s decoding ability furthers the comprehension of the textual information through the definition and pronunciation of words and phrases. Students with ADHD often struggle in this specific skill. Students with ADHD may often struggle with processing speeds that hinder the ability to decode word fluently. This deficit in attention to text can affect these students’ overall ability to read efficiency (Jacobson, Ryan, Martin, Ewen, Mostofsky, Denckla, & Mahone, 2011).

The research study I conducted enabled Katie to encounter decoding issues, and determine ways of resolving these issues based on her understanding of the text, and her improved attention abilities related to the hands-on learning process.

Cummings, Dewey, Latimer, and Good (2011) analyzed the importance of early detection in students with reading disabilities, focusing on the development of decoding capabilities. Students’ skills in areas related to the understanding of the alphabetic principle are important for guiding a teacher’s choices related to literacy instruction. These abilities can inform the teacher with the necessary evidence to enhance into the student’s strengths and weaknesses. It is possible that students who struggle with the alphabetic principle without support from intervention services may enhance their reading deficits as they progress through their schooling. Cummings, et al. (2011) found several assessments that teachers could use to resolve this issue and enable them to know where and how their students are progressing with decoding skills. One of the assessments discussed in this

research study is called Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). This assessment can be used with students in the pre-alphabetic and partial-alphabetic phase. Typically, these students have limited phonemic awareness, and are just beginning to read. If students are not given the training and assessments needed in these pre-reading, and beginning-reading stages, they are likely to struggle with their decoding capabilities long into their school careers. Cummings, et al. (2011) concluded that analyzing a student's abilities in decoding and the alphabetic principle will enable teachers to change their instruction, and to indicate possible reading disabilities.

### **Hands-on Approach**

The hands-on approach to literacy learning gives students the support and ability to focus their attention on the text, and their ability to understand what they are reading (Gapin, & Etneir, 2010). The physical activity in hands-on activities supports the executive functioning of the student (Gapin, & Etneir, 2010). When students are encouraged to perform hands-on literacy tasks, such as creating meaningful crafts to accompany the main idea of a text, or using a highlighter or pen to identify thoughts and ideas that are important in the text, they are able to obtain more specific data and related information to the text. The hands-on approach supports the student's motivation, reading comprehension, and decoding capabilities.

The hands-on approach can support all students to advance their strengths and weaknesses with interaction, incentive, and physical stimuli. The hands-on approach in my research study describes any activity that requires manipulation or stimulation other than that of the tradition reading of a text. The manipulation enabled Katie to analyze the textual information more critically based on the task I had given her.

In their research study, Gapin and Etneir (2010) determined the relationship between

physical activity and executive functioning in students with ADHD. Researchers had students record their physical activity for a short period time, and then determined how executive functioning improved based on the assessments given. The parents recorded the physical activity of each student, over a seven-day consecutive time period. The assessments measured the executive functioning in four specific areas: inhibition, planning, working memory, and processing speed. The results determined that with the more increased physical activity from the students, the more successful their executive functioning outcomes were, especially in the area of planning. This increase in executive functioning among students with ADHD clearly delineates the importance of physical activity (Gapin, & Etneir, 2010).

Hands-on literacy related activities could involve movement. Getting the students up and out of their seats to interact with the text physically, this can be established through readers theater or building and creating text dependent manipulatives. Hands-on literacy related activities could involve talking and listening with other students. Creating a collaborative conversation about the text and then using this information to produce crafts and projects related to the text. Hands-on literacy can be created in many different ways and can promote literacy engagement for all students.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the importance of each area of literacy I chose to define, depicted by the respective research questions. Through my research I was able to develop a further understanding to the overall significance of a hands-on approach to literacy learning. The authors of each research study that I reviewed emphasized the importance of the hands-on approach in accordance with the schema of literacy learning. The diagnosis and understanding of the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder has been outlined in this chapter in order to determine the true strengths and weaknesses related to this type of

disability. A lack of motivation is a common issue among students with ADHD. In this chapter, I highlighted research that suggests that students with ADHD are inherently withdrawn and unmotivated because of a mental limitation due to their disorder. The authors of the research I reviewed offer suggestions to combat this deficiency.

Students with ADHD are often confronted with specific reading comprehension issues. In this chapter, I discuss some of the literature related to the difficulties associated with reading comprehension. The research I have reviewed is supportive of the reading strategies that are used in my research study. I have also highlighted the decoding capabilities of students with ADHD and have secured the overwhelming need for early intervention and the use of assessments related to this area of literacy.

In summation, the literature that I have included in this chapter provides a basis of my research study. The research included in this chapter enhances the reasoning behind my choices and the overall formation of my research study with the use of activities and strategies and the interactions with my student with ADHD.

### **Chapter Three: Methods and Procedures**

The findings from my research study were used to further my understanding of the effect in which hands-on learning can have on a student's literacy development. The student I worked with, Katie, was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The methods and procedures I describe in this section are based upon the research questions:

- How does the hands-on approach affect a student's motivation during literacy learning?
- How does the hands-on approach affect a student's reading comprehension during literacy learning?
- How does the hands-on approach affect a student's ability to decode during literacy learning?

In the following sections I discuss the context of the research study, and provide a description of the participant. I also explain in detailed format the data collection methods and observation instruments. I conclude the chapter with an outline of the procedures of the research study and the data analysis I used to determine the study's findings.

### **Context and Participants**

The research study I have constructed was conducted in the home environment. The community in which the student resides in is a suburban neighborhood with an average population of 100,000 persons, according to the 2010 United States Census Report. Katie's school district has nine elementary schools, and three combined middle and high schools. The student I have observed is currently attending sixth grade in one of the three middle schools in the district. Her classes were integrated inclusive classrooms, with general education students and special education students together. This student has had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) since the third grade. The school district is located in western New



York, and is ranked close to average in consideration of quality, and socioeconomic standards.

I used Katie's IEP as a guide in the creation of the research study, as it applied to her literacy needs, specifically according to her reading disabilities. This student has been diagnosed with a learning disability (LD), and ADHD. Her IEP designated her educational modifications and accommodations for her specified LD, but not for her medical diagnosis of ADHD. Information regarding Katie's diagnosis of ADHD, provided by her parents, indicated she was not receiving any medical treatment for her diagnosis. Given Katie's disability, her IEP designates special education services in regards to English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies classes to be provided in an inclusive setting. In the inclusive setting she is required to receive extra services and support in regards to; preferential seating, checks for understanding, additional time to complete tasks, refocusing and redirection, repetition and review of new concepts, and chunking assignments to break them down. She has been approved for specific testing accommodations; extended time, a testing location with minimal distractions, additional examples provided, tests read (except for Reading Comprehension), and checks for understanding. In regards to her current reading level and abilities, she is able to read independently at a level N, resulting from the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment (Fountas and Pinnell, 2014). The level N designation is equivalent to a student in grade three. Her reading goals, as outlined in her IEP are as follows; she will read a passage at her instructional level and be able to state the main idea with three supporting details with 80 percent success with moderate assistance, evaluated by formal assessments, teacher observation of the specific skill and work samples, assessed quarterly. When reading instructional level text, she will be able to scaffold the beginning, middle, and end of passages presented with 80 percent success evaluated by the teacher devised worksheets and work samples, assessed quarterly. She will answer 3-4 comprehension questions after reading leveled books, with 80 percent success with moderate

assistance, evaluated by the teacher devised worksheets and homework, assessed quarterly.

I conducted the research study in Katie's home environment. I have provided a portrayal of the environment. To create an understanding of the home environment, I provide a description of the adults presiding in the home; Katie lives at home with her mother, father, and oldest brother. Her mother is 46 years old, and she is currently a stay-at-home mom. Her father is 56 years old, and works at a nearby location, Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm. He is also on-call to return to work during all hours of the night. Her oldest brother is 27 years old and due to his work and school schedule, he is not a large presence in the home environment. Other aspects of Katie's home environment include her family's socioeconomic status as middle-class, average income, in regards to their current suburban neighborhood standards. After Katie returns from school, she attends swimming and dance classes from 4pm to 6pm, depending on the day of the week.

I conducted the research study in Katie's home during the hours of 7pm to 8pm. I have created 45-60 minute hands-on reading lessons for Katie that I conducted over a four-week time period. Katie and I met twice a week during the four weeks for a total of eight sessions, and eight hours of instruction. Katie's home is a ranch style, single level house. The research study was conducted in the formal living room, as this was the largest open space with the least amount of possible interruption from the other family members. This area provided the two of us with ample space for seating, flat surfaces for writing, and an open floor plan sufficient for movement during the hands-on activities.

The permission of the Katie's parents is outlined in the parental permission form I have created for the research study, and has been attached to the appendix. This form secured my interactions with Katie in her home environment as the teacher-researcher. In the permission letter to the parents I described in full detail the extent of the research study (see Appendix A). The explanation of the observation and research questions that were evaluated are explicated

in a manner that ensured the parents understanding of the nature of this research study. Any further questions were fielded during our interactions prior to the first scheduled collaboration. Confidentiality of Katie has been insured through the use of the pseudonym, Katie, in all written documents submitted to the University, or for any other submissions involving a third party observer. The explanation of confidentiality was also described in the permission letter to Katie's parents.

I was incorporated in the role of teacher-researcher. This enabled me to act as an active participant, along with the sole observer. Given these specific roles, my interactions were integrated into the overall outcome of the research study, along with the results and analysis of Katie's progression.

### **Data Collection Method/Observation**

I selected the data collection and instruments used for this research study based on accessibility and the time available for the research study during the allotted four-week period. I also selected them based on their profitable impact on Katie's reading abilities, in accordance with her Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and her diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). There were four specific data collection methods for which the student and/or parents were involved: a beginning and follow-up survey about the hands-on approach for literacy learning for the parent to complete, four post-reading evaluations for reading comprehension and decoding for Katie to complete, observation and field notes denoting Katie's actions in relation to motivation for me to complete, and an analysis of the work Katie completed during the research study.

The beginning and follow-up survey were similar in format except the specific tenses of the language to indicate the parents feelings prior to the research study, and their feelings after the culmination of the research study. The survey results indicated several aspects of the

hands-on approach as it applies to literacy learning. The parents knowledge of these aspects were recorded, as well as their understanding of the possible effectiveness related to a research study involving the aspects of hands-on learning.

The questions from the beginning survey were:

- What do you know about the hands-on approach in regards to literacy learning?
- What types of struggles or challenges arise during reading, due to your child's ADHD diagnosis?
- What types of hands-on activities does your child engage in?
- How do you think the hands-on approach might support your student's reading abilities, and her challenges associated with ADHD?

The questions from the follow-up survey were:

- What do you know *now* about the hands-on approach in regards to literacy learning?
- What types of hands-on activities does your child engage in, and how has that changed *after* the research study?
- How do you think the hands-on approach *has* supported your student's reading abilities, and her challenges associated with ADHD?

These parents' responses to the questions highlighted their knowledge and feelings related to the hands-on approach, and the overall understanding of the research study. I evaluated the overall effectiveness related to the guiding research questions based on the parents' responses.

The four post-reading evaluations that I conducted focused on the reading passages that were covered each week, following the schedule of one passage per week. I provided these evaluations in a multiple-choice and short response format. Evaluations were limited to six questions each. Katie's responses to the questions highlighted her ability to comprehend the reading passages, and her ability to decode specific words from the passage used to support

the meaning of the text. The evaluations varied each week, depending on the reading passage I chose as the teacher-researcher. Katie's answers guided my analysis in regards to successful implementation of the hands-on approach related to reading, and relating to the guiding research study questions.

The observation and field notes denoting the Katie's actions in relation to motivation gave insight into her progression throughout the research study. The analysis of Katie's behavior provided me with ample evidence to answer the research questions. I conducted observation and field notes throughout the duration of each session. Considering my role as teacher-researcher, my note taking occurred after the allotted time of conducting the associated hands-on activities, due to the attention needed to be given to Katie. My observation and field notes enabled me to conduct a sufficient reflection of the activity in relation to Katie's motivation and overall effectiveness of the specific hands-on activity.

Throughout the research study Katie completed work samples after each reading. These work samples were dependent on the reading passage associated with the hands-on activity. I used Katie's work samples as a source of data in regards to the productivity related to her comprehension of the reading passage, decoding ability, and her overall motivation displayed by Katie towards the activity.

### **Procedures**

I conducted this study over a four week time period. During each week, I met with Katie twice for a time period of 45 to 60 minutes each day. This contributed to a total of eight hours with Katie. Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the instructional and research related activities conducted with Katie. To offer a more detailed interpretation of the chart I discussed the implementation of both instructional and research related activities based on the determination of the specific week.

For week one of the research study, I conducted the beginning parent survey, the first post-reading evaluation, observation and field notes, and the first hands-on literacy activity. The beginning parent survey was provided for the parent upon my arrival to Katie's home, the parents were given 45 to 60 minutes to complete the survey, as this was the time spent on first hands-on activity, during day one of the research study. The instructional procedures during day one of the research study began with an explanation of the reading passage, along with the clarification of the use of the exercise ball. During the first lesson I asked Katie to read the provided reading passage, while sitting on an exercise ball. Katie needed to stay focused while reading and interpret the main idea, and three supporting details, that were determined at the end of the passage and written on a graphic organizer I provided. The time allotted to complete the activity was flexible according to the 45 to 60 minutes, which allowed Katie sufficient time to complete the passage, and accompanying graphic organizer. During the second meeting of this week, Katie had time to revisit the passage, and the completed graphic organizer before completing the six question post-reading evaluation. As Katie did in the previous lesson, she used the exercise ball to sit upon as she completed the post-reading evaluation. Multiple choice and short response questions were read to her, in order to ensure comprehension of the expectation of the questions. Thorough explanations were provided to Katie as to the procedures for each day. Observation and field notes were completed each lesson to determine the actions concerning motivation of Katie during the hands-on literacy activity.

For week two of the research study, I conducted the second post-reading evaluation, observation and field notes, and the second hands-on literacy activity. The instructional procedures during day three of the research study began with an explanation of the reading passage, along with the clarification of the use of the index cards. During the second lesson Katie was asked to read the provided reading passage in sections delineated by numbers on

the index cards. Katie began in sequential order with the first index card, which had only the first section of the reading passage typed on the card. Once Katie had completed reading the first index card, she interpreted the important details pertaining to the story by highlighting the important words or sentences on the card. Katie then moved to the area in the room where the next index card was lying, following the sequential numerical order. She took the highlighter with her as she traveled. After Katie had finished the passage, she reviewed her highlighted sections and determined the main idea and supporting details of the story. This was recorded on the graphic organizer, as used in the previous lesson. The time allotted to complete the activity was flexible according to the 45 to 60 minutes, which allowed Katie adequate time to complete the passage, and the graphic organizer. As the teacher-researcher I monitored her understanding of the activity, and followed her around to each index card. During the second meeting of this week, Katie had time to revisit the passage, and the graphic organizer before completing the six question post-reading evaluation. Multiple choice and short response questions were read to her, in order to ensure comprehension of the expectation of the questions. Thorough explanations were provided to Katie as to the procedures for each day. Observation and field notes were completed each lesson to determine the actions concerning motivation of Katie during the hands-on literacy activity.

For week three of the research study, I conducted the third post-reading evaluation, observation and field notes, and the third hands-on literacy activity. The instructional procedures during day five of the research study began with an explanation of the reading passage, along with the clarification of the use of the stress ball. During the third lesson Katie was asked to read the provided reading passage while squeezing the stress ball. Katie also used to stress ball to toss to me. She did this every time she encountered a piece of important information in response to the reading passage. When Katie determined the time needed to toss the ball, I asked her to verbally describe what exactly was important to the passage, and I

recorded her words verbatim. Once the passage was complete, she reviewed the information that was recorded by her verbal request, and organized this information on a graphic organizer. The organizer outlined the main idea, and supporting details of the reading passage. The time allotted to complete the activity was flexible according to the 45 to 60 minutes, which allowed Katie ample time to complete the passage, and the graphic organizer. As the teacher-researcher I monitored her understanding of the activity, and required her to only denote the most important pieces of the passage. During the second meeting of this week, Katie had time to revisit the passage and the graphic organizer, before completing the six question post-reading evaluation. Multiple choice and short response questions were read to her, in order to ensure comprehension of the expectation of the questions. Thorough explanations were provided to Katie as to the procedures for each day. Observation and field notes were completed each lesson to determine the actions concerning motivation of Katie during the hands-on literacy activity.

For week four of the research study, I conducted the follow-up parent survey, final post-reading evaluation, observation and field notes, and the final hands-on literacy activity. The instructional procedures during day seven of the research study began with an explanation of the reading passage, along with the clarification of the use of the post-it notes. During the final lesson Katie was asked to read the provided reading passage. As Katie read the passage, every time she encountered a piece of information she deemed important in response to the reading passage, she wrote that information on a post-it note, and placed the post-it note on the board provided. Once the passage was complete, she reviewed the information that was recorded on the post-it notes, and organized this information on a graphic organizer like the one used in the previous lessons. The organizer outlined the main idea, and supporting details of the reading passage. The time allotted to complete the activity was flexible according to the 45 to 60 minutes, which allowed Katie more than enough time to complete the passage,



and the graphic organizer. As the teacher-researcher I monitored her understanding of the activity, and required her to only indicate the most important pieces of the passage. During the second lesson of this week, Katie had time to revisit the passage, and the graphic organizer before completing the six question post-reading evaluation. Multiple choice and short response questions were read to her, in order to ensure comprehension of the expectation of the questions. Thorough explanations were provided to Katie as to the procedures for each day. Observation and field notes were completed each lesson to determine the actions concerning Katie's motivation during the hands-on literacy activity.

**Figure 3.1 Procedures for Research Study**

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
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Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Provide the beginning parent survey. To be completed by the end of Day 1.</li> <li>-Provide explanations of the reading passage, exercise ball, and graphic organizer to the student.</li> <li>-Complete first hands-on literacy activity.</li> <li>-Complete observation and field notes.</li> </ul> <p>(Materials: beginning parent survey, field notes sheet, exercise ball, leveled book, clip board, and graphic organizer)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Provide explanations of the reading passage, index cards, highlighter, and graphic organizer to the student.</li> <li>-Complete second hands-on activity.</li> <li>-Complete observation and field notes.</li> </ul> <p>(Materials: field notes sheet, index cards with leveled book on them, highlighter, and graphic organizer)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Provide explanations of the reading passage, stress ball, and graphic organizer to the student.</li> <li>-Complete third hands-on activity.</li> <li>-Complete observation and field notes.</li> </ul> <p>(Materials: field notes sheet, stress ball, leveled book, clip board, and graphic organizer)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Provide the follow-up parent survey.</li> <li>-Provide explanations of the reading passage, post-it notes, and graphic organizer to the student.</li> <li>-Complete fourth hands-on activity.</li> <li>-Complete observation and field notes.</li> </ul> <p>(Materials: field notes sheet, follow-up parent survey, post-it notes, leveled book, and graphic organizer)</p>
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review passage, and graphic organizer to prepare for post-assessment.</li> <li>-Complete first post-assessment.</li> <li>-Complete observation and field notes.</li> </ul> <p>(Materials: field notes sheet, exercise ball, leveled book, clip board, graphic organizer, and assessment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review passage, and graphic organizer to prepare for post-assessment.</li> <li>-Complete second post-assessment.</li> <li>-Complete observation and field notes.</li> </ul> <p>(Materials: field notes sheet, index cards with leveled book on them, highlighter, graphic organizer, and assessment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review passage, and graphic organizer to prepare for post-assessment.</li> <li>-Complete third post-assessment.</li> <li>-Complete observation and field notes.</li> </ul> <p>(Materials: field notes sheet, stress ball, leveled book, graphic organizer, and assessment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review passage, and graphic organizer to prepare for post-assessment.</li> <li>-Complete fourth post-assessment.</li> <li>-Complete observation and field notes.</li> </ul> <p>(Materials: field notes sheet, post-it notes, leveled book, graphic organizer, and assessment)</p>

### Data Analysis

The analysis of the research data was determined through the success of each of my guiding research questions. The parents' responses to the beginning and follow-up survey

provided me with comparative data into the knowledge and understanding of the parents regarding the hands-on approach to literacy. This information provided a description of the key strengths and weaknesses they believe their daughter possesses given her diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and abilities in literacy. The four post-reading evaluations that I conducted focused on the reading passages that were covered each week, following the schedule of one passage per week. Katie's responses to the six questions highlighted her ability to comprehend the reading passages, and her ability to decode specific words from the passage used to support the meaning of the text. This guided the analysis of the hands-on approach related to reading comprehension, and decoding abilities. I conducted observation and field notes during each of the eight days of research. The analysis of Katie's behavior provided confirmation of the hands-on approach in relation to the motivation of Katie. Katie completed the graphic organizers for each of the four hands-on literacy lessons. I analyzed the graphic organizers were by the productivity related to the Katie's comprehension of the reading passage, decoding ability, and Katie's overall motivation displayed while she completed of the graphic organizer.

The first research question for this research study asked how the hands-on approach affects a student's motivation during literacy learning. To allow for triangulation of data to answer this question I analyzed parents' responses to the beginning and follow-up parent survey, the observation and field notes, and the successful completion of the graphic organizers. Evidence provided from each of these three sources offered validity and reliability to the conclusion or determination of this research question.

The second research question for this research study asked how the hands-on approach affects a student's reading comprehension during literacy learning. To allow for triangulation of data to answer this question I analyzed the post-reading evaluations, the observation and field notes, and the successful completion of the graphic organizers. Evidence provided from

each of these three sources offered validity and reliability to the conclusion or determination of this research question.

The third research question for this research study asked how the hands-on approach affects a student's ability to decode during literacy learning. To allow for triangulation of data to answer this question I analyzed the post-reading evaluation, the observation and field notes, and the successful completion of the graphic organizers. Evidence provided from each of these three sources offered validity and reliability to the conclusion or determination of the research question.

I determined coding systems for each of the questions in the beginning and follow-up parent survey. I coded the six questions used in the post-reading evaluations by their effects on each of the three research questions. I coded the answers to the questions in the beginning and follow-up parent survey, along with the Katie's answers in each of the four post-reading evaluations to ascertain the profitability of the answers and their delineation in regards to the three guiding research questions.

### **Summary**

In the introduction of Chapter Three, I provided a clear overview of the chapter. The research questions were stated to provide the reader with sufficient background information to understand the context of the research study. In the context and participant section, the community and school system Katie resides in was explained. Katie's disabilities were highlighted and related to her literacy development. The home environment was described based on socio-economic status, members of the family unit, and portrayal of the research study setting. In the data collection section the four specific methods were outlined and related back to the research questions. The data collection methods were as follows; beginning and follow-up parent surveys, four post-reading evaluations, daily observation and

field notes, and student work samples. In the procedures section, each day per week was outlined in detail. The four hands-on literacy lessons were explained, along with the sequential steps for each day. Figure 3.1 provides the same information in an outlined format. The final section was the data analysis section. In this section a description is provided for the analysis and interpretation of each data set. The triangulation of data was indicated to ensure evidence of validity and reliability. The coding systems for this research study were outlined based on questions and answers from the beginning and follow-up parent survey and the four post-reading evaluations.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

In this chapter I describe the data collection methods that I employed as the teacher-researcher, along with my reflections regarding the parent surveys, and completed lessons. There were four specific data collection methods for which Katie and/or parents were

involved. The data collection methods that I used as the teacher-researcher were as follows; one survey in the beginning of the research study about the hands-on approach for literacy learning that the parents' completed, a second follow-up survey about the hands-on approach for literacy learning that the parents' completed, four post-reading evaluations to evaluate reading comprehension and decoding that Katie completed, observation and field notes denoting the Katie's actions in relation to motivation that I completed as the teacher-researcher, and an analysis of student work completed during the research study. I conducted the study over a four week time period. During each week, I met with Katie twice for a time period ranging between 45 to 60 minutes each day. This provided me a total of eight hours with Katie.

### **Day 1, Week 1**

For week one, I conducted the first parent survey, the first post-reading evaluation, observation and field notes, and the first hands-on literacy activity. The first parent survey was provided for both parents upon my arrival to Katie's home. I allowed the parents approximately 54 minutes to complete the survey, as this was the amount of time that Katie and I spent on the first hands-on activity during day one of the research study.

The questions from the first parent survey are:

- What do you know about the hands-on approach in literacy learning?
- What types of struggles or challenges arise during reading due to your child's ADHD diagnosis?
- What types of hands-on activities does your child engage in?
- How do you think the hands-on approach might support your child's reading abilities, and her challenges associated with ADHD?

The parents' responses to the first survey provided data about the home environment, and the opportunity to encourage a more successful study as the parents are given the chance to understand more about hands-on literacy and the correlation between ADHD. The parents response to the first survey question, what they knew about the hands-on approach in literacy learning was; "We know a little about the hands-on approach, it lets Katie move around while learning." In the second survey question, what types of struggles or challenges arise during reading due to your child's ADHD diagnosis? The parents shared that their daughter has "trouble reading for a long time, if it's too hard she loses focus, that she forgets what she read quickly, that she has a low reading level, and that she makes up words when reading." In the third survey question, what types of hands-on activities does their daughter engages in, the parents responded "She engages in swimming competitions year round, and dance competitions for half of the year. She enjoys cooking at home and being active and playing outside." The final question of the survey I provided questions how the parents think the hands-on approach might support their daughter's reading abilities, and her challenges associated with ADHD. They responded, "The hands-on activities may help her stay focused longer, and hopefully remember more of what she read."

As a brief overview of lesson one, I explained instructional procedures during day one of my research study began with an explanation of the reading passage, *Amelia Bedelia's First Day of School* by Herman Parish (2011), to Katie. This story was used as a basic comprehension task to determine the overall strengths and needs of this student. I used this text as a base line to determine the rest of the texts that will be used in this study. Because this text has a grade level of preschool – grade 3, determined by the publisher Greenwillow Books, I thought it might be a simple read for this student. This student's current independent reading level determined by her reading teacher is grade 3, level N according to Fountas and Pinnell. The main idea of the story would be considered on grade level with a first or second

grade student. This conclusion is based on the nature of the story, and the language used in the story. In *Amelia Bedelia's First Day of School*, there are 32 pages, with each page consisting of 4-5 lines of text. I assumed previously when choosing this text that the words that may require my student to decode are few and limited, based on the overall complexity of the language in the text. The hands-on portion of this first lesson focuses on Katie; we will refer to as Katie, and her use of the exercise ball. I determined it to be necessary to denote the absolute effects of motivation based on the use of exercise ball, and her behavior throughout the lesson. During the observation portion of this lesson, I noted Katie's motivation and attention given to the story during her use of the exercise ball. There is some evidence of higher level thinking in this text, and Katie needed to attend to the words, beyond their literal meaning. For instance, on page 2, the text reads:

“Are you my teacher?” she asked.

“I am Mrs. O'Malley, I teach gym.”

“Oh,” said Amelia Bedelia. “I am not Jim. I'm Amelia Bedelia.”

Katie was required to understand that during this dialogue between Amelia and the Gym teacher that Amelia misunderstood the interaction. When Mrs. O'Malley said that she taught gym, Amelia thought Mrs. O'Malley meant that she taught a student named Jim. There were several other instances in this text where the main character, Amelia Bedelia, misunderstood figures of speech, and was literal in her interactions.

The usage and purpose of the exercise ball during the first lesson was also clarified to Katie. During the first lesson I asked Katie to read the provided reading passage, *Amelia Bedelia's First Day of School*, while sitting on an exercise ball. I asked Katie to stay focused while reading and to think about how she might interpret the main idea, and three supporting details. I explained to her that these pieces of the story would need to be determined at the end of the passage and written on a graphic organizer. The time allotted to complete the



activity was flexible according to the 45 to 60 minutes, allowing Katie sufficient time to complete the passage, and accompanying graphic organizer. Katie and I spent 54 minutes completing the first lesson.

In the beginning of the lesson, Katie and I briefly discussed the purpose for my visits over the next four weeks. I began by discussing what hands-on literacy means. I told her I would be giving her tasks that would encourage her to engage in movement while reading or completing literacy tasks. This movement may have different effects on her as she's reading. I explained that I would like to study those effects and determine if they are positive, or negative to her overall understanding of the books she will be reading. Katie told me she understood what hands-on literacy was and that she has heard the term "hands-on" before in the classroom. She explained by stating "When we do hands-on stuff, we get to play with the materials." I was pleased that she already had some background knowledge on what it meant to conduct an activity using manipulatives, and in a hands-on manner. I was pleased because I was hoping that these hands-on lessons I had planned would be supportive to her needs, and not become a distraction. Although she did not express what types of hands-on lessons she was involved in in the classroom, I felt that Katie would be more apt to try new types of hands-on learning given her seemingly positive previous experiences. I explained that I would be observing how the use of hands-on lessons influenced her literacy development, and that I would be taking notes as I observed her reading. Katie expressed that she was used to teachers taking notes as she read, "They always are writing when I'm reading."

I told Katie that in this first meeting she would be sitting on an exercise ball. I chose an exercise ball to be used because of the affects I have seen on students in the classroom. For students with ADHD the act of sitting on an exercise ball allows them to continue to be in motion. The use of the exercise ball is an attempt to keep their brain stimulated as they focus on a literacy task. As she was sitting on the exercise ball I asked her to remain focused on the

story. I would be asking her to fill out a graphic organizer that would denote the main idea of the short story, along with three supporting details (see figure 4.1). She explained that she was accustomed to filling out similar graphic organizers at school as she read, and she was ready to start the activity.

I gave a short synopsis of the reading passage, *Amelia Bedelia's First Day of School* by Herman Parish (2011). She chose to read aloud as she read. I did not give her that instruction, but I allowed her to do so. She made comments about the reading aloud as she read, the teacher in the story's name is Mrs. Edwards. When Katie read that she said, "Mrs. Edwards? That reminds me of *Twilight*." At first she began reading the first four pages while bouncing up and down on the exercise ball, and rocking back and forth. She then began to make smaller movements on the exercise ball as she continued to read. These smaller movements included her bouncing up and down slowly and not as forcefully. As she read, she began sitting up taller and holding the book at a higher level. Katie held the book up higher as she sat up taller, which allowed her to look at the book closer. I noticed that her improved posture was accompanied by her ability to understand some of the higher level thinking in this text. For instance on page 5 of the text, Katie started to laugh when the main character's teacher, Miss Edwards stated, "We aren't playing tag. I have a name tag for you." During the rest of the short reading (32 pages), I jotted down some of the words Katie struggled with; grown-up, O'Malley, laughing, whole, and rhymes, as I could use these words in the post-reading evaluation I would compile for the next lesson. When she was stuck on a word in the beginning of the story she would look to me for help, rather than decode on her own. She did this for the words, rhymes and hollered. When I asked her to break words apart on her own she was able to do so if prompted. Katie decoded the words, chickadees and flattering, through this strategy. When Katie had exactly two pages left in this short story she began showing signs of decreased motivation. Katie had already read 30 pages of the story at this

time. She began to slouch on the exercise ball, and she lost her place in the text three separate times. She was not using her finger to track at all during this reading. When she lost her place in the text, she said, “Wait, what?” and then attempted to resume her place in the text. This text has a maximum of five lines per page, and in the last two pages there was five lines on one page, and three lines and the last page. As she skipped lines, she would attempt to locate which line she was reading from previously. This jumbled reading led to some confusion.

At the end of the story, Katie completed the graphic organizer (see Figure 4.1). I explained to her that all stories have an overarching main idea, or main ideas. I explained this by saying “The main idea is what the story is mostly about.” I asked her to determine what she thought was the main idea of the reading passage she had just finished. I also explained to her that she would need to establish three supporting details, and list them on the graphic organizer as well. I explained this by saying, “These boxes (pointing to the bottom of the graphic organizer) is where you write three examples from the story that would support the main idea you chose.” Katie chose to continue to sit on the exercise ball as she filled out the graphic organizer provided to her. On the exercise ball she bounced slightly, using small up and down movements as she filled out the graphic organizer. Katie wrote that the main idea was, It was Amelia Bedelia’s first day of school. The first detail was; Amelia Bedelia was so excited to go to school. The second detail was; Amelia Bedelia was learning a lot of new stuff and made new friends too and made new projects too. The last detail was; Amelia Bedelia has fun at her first day of school and she found out other people had their first day too. After Katie finished her graphic organizer, she read to me what she had written. We then had a discussion about whether or not her details were supportive of her main idea. She said “my details were supportive I think.” And she said “I couldn’t remember everything so I wrote like sort of what I remembered. That’s what I do in school too cause I don’t always

remember everything, you know.” I responded, “It’s important to included specific details from the story, that way when we look back at the graphic organizer next time, it will refresh our memory of the story. And it helps me understand your thinking better if you write a little bit more. Is there anything else you can think of adding to the graphic organizer?” Katie responded, “No.”

**Figure 4.1: Graphic Organizer #1**

<p style="text-align: center;">Main Idea</p> <p>It was Amelia Bedelia's first day of school.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Detail</p> <p>Amelia Bedelia was so excited to go to school.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Detail</p> <p>Amelia Bedelia was learning a lot of new things and made new friends too and made new projects too.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Detail</p> <p>Amelia Bedelia had fun at her first day of school and she found out a secret for a treat and the there was new to on her first day too.</p>

## Reflection

After the conclusion of the first lesson, I reviewed my observation notes, and responded to my research questions based solely on this first interaction. My first question: How does a hands-on approach affect a student’s motivation during literacy activities? Katie was very excited to be using the exercise ball. She chose to sit on the ball even after the reading. She filled out the graphic organizer while sitting on the exercise ball. At first Katie was bouncing up and down quite furiously when she began reading, and then quickly changed positions to allow better posture and smaller movements while sitting on the exercise ball. These slight movements seemed to occupy her need for action, while still

allowing her to focus on the reading of the story. Towards the end of the short passage however, Katie began slouching and forgetting her place in the story. She was clearly losing focus on what she was reading. Katie enjoyed the book choice as well. The book choice was supportive in her motivation. I believe that she enjoyed this story because she could relate to the school setting and the story also had a quick reading pace.

My second question: How does a hands-on approach affect a student's reading comprehension during literacy activities? I will be investigating further into this revelation in the next lesson where she was given a post-reading evaluation; therefore I can only speculate based on Katie's ability to complete the graphic organizer. The statements that she made in the graphic organizer were vague yet accurate. She was able to understand the overarching main idea that this was Amelia Bedelia's first day of school. However she would not be able to recite specific details from the text that would chronicle the happenings on her first day.

My third question: How does the hands-on approach affect a student's ability to decode during literacy activities? As I explained earlier, this text was intended to be an easier text for Katie, based on her school's analysis of her independent reading level being at a third grade level, level N according to Fountas and Pinnell, and this text's determined level of first to second grade. Katie was still a bit frustrated with this text. There were several words that she was unable to read correctly and were not decoded properly: grown-up, O'Malley, laughing, whole, and rhymes. Katie did not seem to be aware that the words she read were incorrect because she did not attempt to decode them further. Each word that was substituted by Katie was substituted with similar looking nonsense words, and Katie continued reading as if the words actually made sense. For example, Katie read, "Come back!" said Miss Edwards, langing." Instead of laughing, Katie read "langing". She did not correct this error, it is possible that she did not recognize it as an error, and continued to read.

## **What Went Well**

Katie was able to attend to the lesson for the majority of the 54 minutes. The use of the exercise ball was successful and seemed to occupy her need for movement. During the literacy lesson she was attending to the text very well. The first 30 pages of the text she was interested and focused on the reading.

## **What I Would do Differently**

The movement of the exercise ball occupied Katie and this may have helped her continue to focus on the reading. However, the graphic organizer was not as detailed as I would have liked. Katie was unable to recall specific details of the text, and she did not choose to elaborate on her explanations of the main idea and supporting details. In our next reading lesson, I will attempt to support her through discussion while completing the graphic organizer.

## **Day 2, Week 1**

The instructional procedures during day two of the research study began with an explanation of the activities Katie would be completing. I explained to Katie that we would have time to revisit the passage, and the completed graphic organizer before completing the post-reading evaluation. I described to Katie that after each lesson where she would embark upon a reading activity the next lesson would be a follow-up on the information she read from the passages. I would ask her to take a short assessment, with a maximum of 10 questions each. As Katie did in the previous lesson, she was again going to be using the exercise ball to sit upon as she completes the post-reading evaluation. She was using the exercise ball as well as a clipboard to rest the post-reading evaluation paper on as she completed the questions orally. I explained to Katie that the “short quiz” consisted of

multiple choice and short response questions that I would read to her, in order to ensure comprehension of the expectation of the questions. I also explained to Katie that I would continue to take observation notes throughout this lesson as well.

After the brief explanation of the day's procedures, Katie and I began to review the text, *Amelia Bedelia's First Day of School*, by Herman Parish (2011). I suggested that we should use the pictures in the text to refresh her memory of the story. Katie began to turn the pages looking at the pictures and reminiscing about the character of Amelia, and the overall storyline of the text. Katie said, "oh yea, I remember when she went to art class, she was funny." I prompted her with a question when she was not responding. I would say, "what does this picture remind you of from the story?" Katie commented on specific things about the character Amelia, like how Amelia would always take what her teachers' said so literally, and how this would become comical, "she would think that what the teacher said was for real, but she didn't really understand what they meant, that's why she's funny." After reviewing the text while looking through the bold picture displays, Katie and I looked at the graphic organizer that she completed in the previous lesson. The graphic organizer was organized into four sections. The main idea of the text was placed in a large rectangle at the top of the page. The three supporting details boxes filled the bottom section of the page. Katie read her responses that she recorded on the graphic organizer. She read them silently to herself, but asked a few questions about what she may have written because she could not read her own writing. Although her handwriting was neat, some of the words she had written were not spelled correctly and made them harder for her to read on her own. I decided that next time I would help her write the graphic organizer, or possibly while she read it back to me I would write underneath her words in the correct spelling. This way the graphic organizer might be more helpful for her post-reading evaluation. The reviewing of the text and graphic organizer took a total of about 20 minutes. Longer than I had expected but I think that Katie was

rereading the text as she looked at the pages. She did not say that she was rereading but it seemed that way by the amount of time she would spend looking at each page.

After reviewing the text, and the supporting notes in the graphic organizer, Katie then completed the first post-reading evaluation (see Figure 4.2). This evaluation was designed to assess the Katie's comprehension of the text, along with her ability to decode certain words from the text. To create the post-reading evaluation I used the text, *When Readers Struggle: Teaching that Works* by Fountas and Pinnell (2009). Chapter 17, Teaching for Comprehending: Thinking Before, During, and After Reading was supportive in my development of the comprehension assessment. In this chapter, Fountas and Pinnell break down reading comprehension into three areas; thinking within the text, thinking beyond the text, and thinking about the text. A reader must be able to attend to all of these types of thinking to fully understand the meaning of the text. As I developed the questions for the post-reading evaluation I was certain to introduce questions involving word solving, and summarizing to support her within the text knowledge (Figure 4.2, Questions: 1, 4, and 6). I also created questions encouraging her to make inferences about the text, to support Katie's thinking beyond the text (Figure 4.2, Questions: 2, and 3). Lastly, I created a question prompting Katie to analyze the text, to support her thinking about the text (Figure 4.2, Question: 5). As I read aloud each question to Katie, she would follow along tracking with her finger. The questions and her responses are depicted in Figure 4.2.

### **Figure 4.2: Post-Reading Evaluation #1**

Post-Reading Evaluation #1  
Amelia Bedelia's First Day of School  
By Herman Parish (2011)

1. What do you think is the main idea of this story?



*It was Amelia Bedelia's first day of school.*

2. Why do you think Amelia, “sat right down in the middle of the classroom”, on page 7.

*She liked all of the stuff, and she liked what she seen, so she sat right down in the middle.*

3. List one part in the story where Amelia did something different than what she was expected to do. Why do you think she did this?

*When the teacher wanted the kids to say “here” when she called their names, Amelia Bedelia said, “what”. I think she did that because when people say your name they say what sometimes.*

4. On page 16, “Mrs. Melody arrived with her guitar and tambourine.” What does the underlined word mean? How do you know?

*An instrument, I used it before. I look at the rest of the sentence, I know guitar so that's how I know.*

5. There are several different *figures of speech, and expressions* in this story. List one of these, and then explain what Amelia did when she heard the *figure of speech, or expression*.

*“Please glue yourself to seat.” The teacher said this and she did that.*

6. On page 28, Miss Edwards says, “I should have known better than to say that to you, especially on your first day of school.” What does the underlined word mean? How do you know?

*It is different than excited or expected because of the ending.*

### **Analysis of Post-Reading Evaluation**

The first question in the post-reading evaluation asked Katie to summarize and determine the main idea of the text. She already created a main idea on the graphic organizer completed in the previous lesson. I felt that this question would be easy for her to comprehend and recite a successful answer. As I read this question aloud to her, Katie seemed confused. She asked, “What is the main idea again?” I told her, “The main idea is what the story is mostly about. Look at the graphic organizer we created last time.” She looked at the graphic organizer, and saw that the top box was titled main idea and she responded, “It was Amelia Bedelia's first day of school.” I was hoping that the first question

would have been easier for Katie to comprehend, but I still think that it is an important question to continue to ask in the evaluations.

The second question asked Katie to make an inference about the text. Why do you think Amelia, “sat right down in the middle of the classroom”, on page 7. After reading the question aloud to Katie, she asked if she could turn to page 7 in the text. I told her she could and so she opened the text to page 7. After opening the text she asked me to repeat the question to her. She seemed to take her time thinking about this question, I gave her about a minute to think and look at the page before I asked her if she needed clarification about the question. She said, “No, what was the question again?” The second time that she asked for the question to be repeated, I pointed to the exact sentence in the text where the question came from. Once doing so she gave an answer soon after. Her response was, “She liked all the stuff, and she liked what she seen, so she sat right down in the middle.” I believe that her response was sufficient in interpreting what the author might have meant when he wrote that line in the text. I think that Katie made a successful inference in response to this question.

The third question asked Katie to make an inference about the text. List one part in the story where Amelia did something different than what she was expected to do. *Why* do you think she did this? At first Katie responded, “That happened a lot.” I told Katie to choose only one part in the story, and then to explain why she thinks the character Amelia responded in that way. Katie said, “I don’t want to read it again.” I told her that she could skim the pages to search for the answer, and that she did not have to read the whole story again. Katie picked up the book, flipped through three pages, and then closed the book. She responded, “When the teacher wanted the kids to say “here” when she called their names, Amelia Bedelia said, “what.” I think she did that because when people say your name they say what sometimes.” I felt that this response was supportive in her understanding of the character, and she made a fair inference about the characters response to her teacher. I think that when Katie

formulates a response to my questions, the way that she expresses her response can be somewhat unclear. However, I understood what she meant by her reasoning, and I did not ask her to clarify.

The fourth question asked Katie to solve the underlined word. On page 16, “Mrs. Melody arrived with her guitar and tambourine.” What does the underlined word mean? How do you know? After I read this question aloud to Katie, she picked up the book, and turned to page 16. I liked how comfortable she was with referencing the text to ensure her answers were accurate. I did not have to prompt her to use the book for support at all. Katie found the sentence in the text and read, “Mrs. Melanie arrived with her guitar and tangerine. No... wait... what did I say?” I repeated the sentence she read back to her, and Katie laughed. “I mean tambourine,” she said. I read the question again to Katie because I wanted her to identify what the word meant, and how she knew the meaning. Her response was, “An instrument, I used it before. I look at the rest of the sentence, I know guitar so that’s how I know.” I reminded Katie that when she read the sentence out loud she knew it didn’t sound right, and then she looked closer at that last word. She agreed. I think that Katie does have word decoding skills, but I think that she is unable to really understand what types of skills she uses, and how they can help her. This might be something we can work on identifying in future lessons.

The fifth question asked Katie to analyze the text. There are several different *figures of speech, and expressions* in this story. List one of these, and then explain what Amelia did when she heard the *figure of speech, or expression*. After reading this question to Katie she asked, “What is a figure of speech mean?” I told her that a figure of speech is a saying that people say sometimes that we should not take literally. I used the example, “When someone says that you woke up on the wrong side of the bed, they don’t really mean that you got up on the left side instead of the right.” Katie responded, “Yea, it just means you’re like mad sort

of.” I told her to find a figure of speech or expression in the story that the teacher may have used, and that Amelia did not understand. Katie picked up the book and began to sift through the pages. For this question she seemed to be rereading the text, and I didn’t want her to have to reread the entire book again, just to answer the question. I reminded her to skim through the pages so she could quickly remind her self of where in the text the character may have misunderstood the teacher. Katie said, “It happened a lot so I’m looking for a good one.” I gave her about two more minutes to look through the text before I asked her what she had discovered. Katie responded, “Please glue yourself to your seat.” The teacher said this and she did that.” I think that Katie’s response was successful and her understanding of the question was clear. She seemed to become motivated by this question, and she enjoyed returning to the text to find an example.

The sixth, and last question asked Katie to solve a word from the text that she had trouble reading in the previous lesson. On page 28, Miss Edwards says, “I should have known better than to say that to you, especially on your first day of school.” What does the underlined word mean? How do you know? Katie picked up the text and turned to page 28. She found the sentence in the text and seemed to read the sentence to her self because she slowly slid her finger under the sentence and mouthed the words. I could not tell if she read the underlined word when she did this. After about a minute Katie looked at me and said she had no idea what the word meant or how to say the word. I told her to skip over the word and see if that would help her. She said she still did not know. I then told her to look at the parts of the word, and to break it into chunks. I told her she might recognize some of the chunks. Katie told me that, “this is too hard I give up.” I didn’t want her to give up and feel discouraged on the very last question so I asked her to think of words that look similar to the underlined word. After about a minute or so, Katie’s response was, “It is different than excited or expected because of the ending.” I decided to write this down as her answer to

question six. I think that she was on the right track with this response and I did not want her to feel discouraged or overwhelmed by the post-reading evaluation.

Overall day two took about 45 minutes. Katie's movement on the exercise ball was consistent throughout the reviewing of the text and graphic organizer, and the completion of the post-reading evaluation. She did not make any large movements, as she had in the previous lesson. Katie bounced slightly on the ball making small up and down motions. She seemed comfortable on the ball throughout the entirety of day two. At the end of the post-reading evaluation she even asked if she could keep the ball to use at home because she said it was better than sitting on a chair to do homework. Katie described the ball as, "comfy and fun." I was slightly surprised by the amount of time it took to review the text and then complete the evaluation. Katie likes to take her time with her responses and I think I might need to be more lenient with my wait time. I feel as if I may have been rushing her responses, because I was concerned that she was misunderstanding the questions.

### **What Went Well**

Oral responses to the questions were supportive in her development and formulation of an answer. I think I will continue to allow Katie to respond orally to the post-reading evaluations. I think that it is easier for Katie to respond orally, and I think I will gain a better understanding of her comprehension if I continue to allow the oral responses. I also believe that I learned more about her cognitive abilities and how she processes her thoughts. I understand now that she needs an extensive amount of wait time before she responds to a question. I need to give her time to formulate a response, or react to the question if she is unsure. Katie does not seem fully interested in a text if you ask her to read it and then tell you what it was about. The post-reading evaluation allowed her to dig deeper into the meaning of the reading, and she seemed to be motivated by this positive interaction.

### **What I Would do Differently**

The graphic organizer was not used much as a support for Katie. I think that her inability to read her own handwriting hindered the usage of the graphic organizer. I would like to continue the use of the organizer because it allows her to write down specific ideas from the story, which may help in her recollection of the text. Next time, as I ask her to read her writing back to me, I will write underneath her words so she will be able to recall what she wrote easier. I would like to support her word decoding abilities while she's reading and during the post-reading evaluations. I think that questions 4 and 6 gave me a better insight into her knowledge of her own decoding skills. I have seen little bookmarks with decoding strategies listed on them, I may introduce a similar type of bookmark in the next lesson. In day one and two, I would have like to have created some type of quantitative data that may have allowed a better understanding of the overall effect of the exercise ball and her ability to focus more and comprehend the text. In my next lessons I will at least have an activity to compare to even though the hands-on activities/physical movement involved in the lesson will be different. Overall I think that the exercise ball could support Katie's need for movement and enhance her comprehension, although further testing may be needed to understand how exactly it might become a support and not a hindrance to her literacy success.

### **Day 3, Week 2**

In the second lesson and week two of the research study, I conducted the second hands-on literacy activity with Katie. She completed another graphic organizer, and I completed observation and field notes. The instructional procedures during day three of the research study began with an explanation of the reading passage, along with the clarification

of the use of the index cards. The story used for lesson two was, *Horrible Harry in Room 2B* by Suzy Kline (1997). Katie chose the text. I offered a selection of 3 texts for her to choose from for our use in the next few lessons. They were all chapter books, and I told her that whatever book she chose was going to be used throughout the rest of our time together. Continuing the same text may help Katie with her recall and comprehension of the text. I infer that she chose this text for several reasons: this text includes pictures on almost every page, this text uses a larger font than the other text options, and the chapters are only about 10 pages each. These characteristics may have appealed to her because the text may have seemed easier than the others.

In this lesson, Katie was asked to read the provided reading passage in sections delineated by numbers on index cards. Prior to this meeting I created index cards with short sections of chapter one typed on each card. The index cards displayed about 6-8 sentences each, about half a page to a page on each card, and were numbered in order to follow the text. I explained to Katie that she will begin reading in sequential order with the first index card, which has only the first section of the reading passage typed on the card. I told her that once she has completed reading the first index card, she would need to interpret the important details pertaining to the story by highlighting the important words or sentences on the card. She would then move to the area in the room where the next index card was lying, following the sequential numerical order. The index cards were placed around the room in a circle, this way she would not be looking around the room at random to find the next card. Katie was asked to will take the highlighter with her as she travels, and after she finished the chapter, we would review her highlighted sections and determine the main idea and supporting details of the story. This will be recorded on the graphic organizer, as used in the previous lesson.

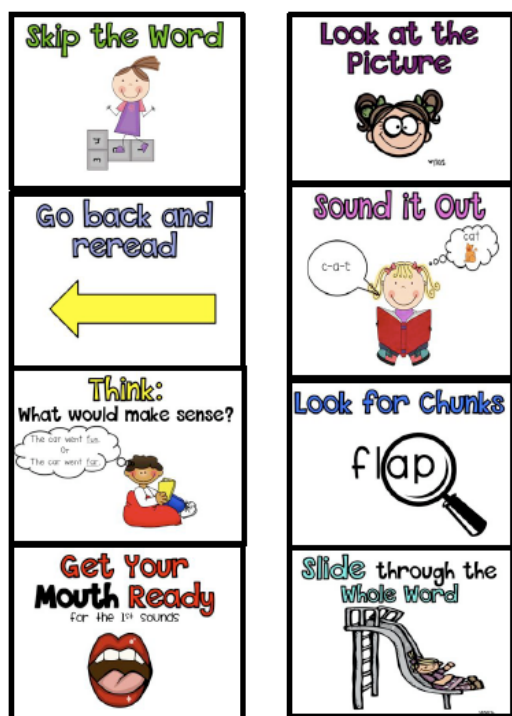
As a suggestion from my previous observation notes, I thought that Katie might benefit from a decoding strategy support. I found a poster with 8 decoding strategies and eight

corresponding pictures for her to use as a support, and I created a replica for her to hang on her bulletin board (see Figure 4.3). I described to Katie how these strategies might be used prior to the reading activity. I began by explaining that when she is reading and she finds a tricky word, there are some strategies she can use to help her solve that word on her own. She said that she was aware of these strategies, “I know, my teacher tells me this stuff too.” I displayed the poster for her to view before I read and defined the strategies. I pointed the first box on the top left and said that sometimes when we are reading we can skip a tricky word, and the sentence will still make sense, and this may also help us determine the word after completing the sentence. Katie said, “I don’t like to do that one because I forget to go back sometimes so...” I responded that you do not always have to go back, as long as the sentence still makes sense. The next box to the right was a reminder to look at the picture. I told Katie that pictures could give us clues to the text. She agreed and said that she often uses the pictures. The next box said to ‘go back and reread’. I told Katie that I see her using this strategy of rereading and asked her if it helped her to understand the text. She said yes. The next box said to ‘sound it out’. I told Katie that this strategy couldn’t be used all the time because sometimes words can’t be sounded out; I used the example “laugh”. The next box said ‘think what would make sense’. I explained to Katie that while reading we might have to stop and think what would make sense in place of the tricky word, and this may either help us solve the word, or at least be able to move on in the text. The next box said ‘look for chunks’. Katie responded, “I do that a lot.” The next box said ‘get your mouth ready for the first sounds’. I explained to Katie that if we are getting our mouth ready for the first sounds we are also chunking the beginning sounds that we know. The last box said ‘slide through the whole word’. Katie responded, “I don’t like to do that because then I don’t know what it is.” I thought this was an interesting response. Katie seemed to be aware of the fact that she sometimes creates nonsense words when she is reading without making meaning. I told her



that when we are sliding through a word, we might need to slide through it a couple of times before the word starts to make sense. After reviewing these decoding strategies I told Katie that we would hang this poster up on her wall so she could see it while we worked together. I also told her that she does not need to use all of the decoding strategies; only whichever ones make sense in a particular situation.

**Figure 4.3: Decoding Strategies**



After I explained the use of the poster and Katie chose the text, *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997), I placed the corresponding index cards around the room (13 in total), and handed her the highlighter to begin. The first chapter was titled, *Horrible Harry and Me*, and began on page 3. Katie again chose to read aloud. On index card #1 she highlighted, “Harry loves to do horrible things” (p. 3). After highlighting she asked if she needed to highlight a lot of words. I told her to only highlight what she felt was important. Katie chose to read the index cards while continuing to stand. When she highlighted she also stood. I found this interesting because there were opportunities for her to sit as she read but she chose to stand instead.

On index card #2 Katie highlighted, “When he trapped her by the tree, he opened up his box and dangled a garter snake in her face” (p. 4). In this section of the passage, Katie read dangled as, “dagly”. I did not stop her to see if she could rethink that word because the miscue did not seem to interfere with her comprehension of the text.

On index card #3 Katie highlighted, “When it’s Harry’s turn to be up, everyone wonders, *Will Harry tap me on the head?*” (p. 4). During her reading of this section, Katie struggled with the word knuckle. At first she looked to me to give her the word. I directed her towards the poster instead. I told her to think about a strategy to use for this word. She attempted to break apart the word into chunks. She read, “kuh-nu-ck-lee”. She seemed to realize that this didn’t make sense and decided to just skip the word and keep reading. The second time the word occurred in the text she read, “uncle” and continued to read. The word appeared for a third time and she said, “I have no idea what that word is.” I told her the word was knuckle. I could tell that she was frustrated, and I did not want her to lose the meaning of the text.

On index card #4 Katie highlighted, “The second week of school, Sidney called Harry a name” (p. 5). In this section of the text, Katie read the teacher’s name, Miss Mackle, as “Miss Macklee”. Katie seems to struggle with the -le ending, when it comes to unknown words.

On index card #5 Katie highlighted, “And that’s when Harry started to tickle Sidney under the armpits until Sidney couldn’t stand it any longer” (p. 5-6). In this section Katie struggled with the word revenge. She paused before she read the word and said, “re-rev-rummage”. I asked her if that made sense, and Katie responded, “not really but I don’t know.” I asked her to reread the sentence and think about what would make sense instead. She reread the sentence three times and was able to successfully decode the word as “revenge”. I noticed that Katie was only highlighting one sentence on each card. I reminded her to highlight any important details in the text. I told her that this might be more than one sentence, or even a small chunk of a sentence.

On index card #6 Katie decided not to highlight at all. I asked her why she didn't highlight and she said, "Nothing was that important."

On index card #7 Katie highlighted, "Nobody knows that Harry keeps some of that stuff" (p. 7). In this part of the text, Katie miscued on the word crawled, she read "clawed".

On index card #8 Katie highlighted, "Someday, when he has made twenty-four, Harry says, his stub people will invade our room" (p. 8). In this section of the text, Katie was able to successfully use a decoding strategy to figure out the word invade. She broke apart the word into chunks, "in-volve-d, no in... in-vade." I told her she did a good job breaking apart the word into chunks that she knew.

On index card #9 Katie highlighted, "After we sang "Happy Birthday," Song Lee passed out treats" (p. 9).

On index card #10 Katie highlighted, "Miss Mackle picked Harry and me. She knows we're not afraid to go upstairs where the big kids are" (p. 9).

On index card #11 Katie highlighted, "Then we ate the librarian's cupcake" (p. 11). As she read this section Katie read the word cupcake as "cappuccino". She stopped to look at me after she read the word incorrectly. On the previous index card she read the word cupcake correctly. I asked her if that made sense and she said, "No, but it looks the same." I asked her what would make sense instead. She looked at the word again and said, "cup-cake, oh yea that's what I meant."

On index card #12 Katie highlighted, "The day before Columbus Day, Harry came to school with a tattoo on his arm." "I know Harry did it with a Magic Marker" (p. 11). This was the first time that Katie highlighted two sentences that were not next to each other. I felt that she was really making sense of the text based on the connection between the two sentences.

On the last index card, #13 Katie highlighted, "Harry's my best friend" (p. 13).

After Katie finished the reading, I placed all of the index cards in sequential order on the table. I asked Katie to reread the parts that she highlighted before we completed the graphic organizer. Katie chose to read the highlighted parts to herself, and I waited until she was finished. After she reread the pieces of the text that she highlighted she said, “Wow a lot happened in chapter 1.” I told her that she did a good job of noticing the more important parts of the text.

Next, she completed the graphic organizer (see Figure 4.4). In the previous lessons I discussed allowing Katie to complete the organizer in her own writing, but then I would write underneath her words that were written illegibly or spelled incorrectly. This would help her be able to use the graphic organizer to support her completion of the post-reading evaluation. In the top section titled Main Idea, Katie wrote, “Harry is horrible Harry get’s into trouble.” I felt that this response was accurate. Chapter one is all about the different types of pranks Harry pulls, and his poor behavior in the classroom. In the first detail box Katie wrote, “Sidney called Harry a name and Harry wanted to get revenge so he tickled him and made him say I love girls, I love girls.” I felt that this detail supported the main idea that Katie had expressed. In the second detail box Katie wrote, “Song Lee was having a b-day at her school and Miss Mackle picked 2 people to take a plate of goodies to the librarian and Harry and Doug made a promise not to tell anyone about eating the cupcake.” While Katie was writing down this detail she was confused about a part in the story. She knew that there were two people that went to the librarian to bring her the cupcake, but she could not recall who was with Harry. At first she wrote “Harry and me made a promise”. I asked her who me was, and she said that she wasn’t sure but that’s what it had said in the text. I prompted Katie to return to the first index card. On this card we learn the name of Harry’s friend, Doug. I told Katie that the character Doug is actually the one who was narrating the story, and that everything was being told from his perspective. She didn’t seem to understand what this meant so I told

her that Doug was the one telling the story about Harry, so when we see the words, “Harry and me” that means Harry and Doug. Katie said she understood, and then added “Doug” in her detail section, above the word “me”. In the third detail box, Katie wrote, “Harry was doing a writing piece so he made it up but no one knew but Doug did he said Harry did not go to sea or meet a mermaid and eat a sea turtle Harry is Doug’s best friend.” I found it interesting that Katie chose to include a detail into her graphic organizer that she did not choose to highlight. The lesson took about 55 minutes to complete. Katie requires a lot of think time to supply her answers for the graphic organizer. She also reads at a slower pace, Katie’s fluency is quite choppy and at times robotic.

**Figure 4.4: Graphic Organizer #2**

<p style="text-align: center;">Main Idea</p> <p>Harry is <del>horrible</del> Harry gets into trouble.  <del>horrible</del></p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Detail</p> <p>Sidney called Harry a name and Harry <sup>wanted</sup> to get revenge so he tickled him and made him say I Love Girls, I Love Girls.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Detail</p> <p>Song Lee was having a day at her school and Miss Mac picked 2 people to take a plate of goodies to the library and Harry and he made a person not to tell anyone about eating the</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Detail</p> <p>Harry was doing a <sup>writing piece</sup> <del>writing piece</del> So he made it up but no one knew but Doug did he said Harry did not go to sea or meet a mermaid and eat a sea turtle Harry is Doug's best friend.</p>

### What Went Well

Compared to Katie’s work on the previous reading she included a lot more information into her details section of the graphic organizer. I feel that this strategy of breaking the text into smaller sections allowed Katie to process the information easier. I also feel that the act of highlighting permitted Katie the time to process the information she just read, and evaluate the importance of each section. The hands-on portion of this activity was using the

highlighter, and the act of moving around the room to attend to the next part of the chapter on the index cards. The use of the highlighter and the act of moving to the next part of the story allowed Katie to use movement while reading, and gave her the tactile sensation of holding each index card and using the highlighter. She was motivated by this task because she enjoys integrating movement into her reading activities and I also think that the highlighter motivated her as well. The highlighter gave her the power to determine what she felt was important and she liked being able to highlight right over the text. At one point in the reading activity she expressed, “I can’t do this in my own books but I would like to.” I asked her why she liked using the highlighter and she said, “I can see the words easy.” I assume that she meant it was easier to reread the parts she highlighted because the highlighter made them stand out.

### **What I Would do Differently:**

The amount of index cards may have been overwhelming for Katie. Next time I attempt a similar lesson, I might condense the chapter into larger sections, or possibly only use part of the chapter. Katie seems to be struggling with fluency, although she has a good understanding of the text. I wonder what I can do to enhance her fluency, without resorting to choosing a text at a lower comprehension level.

### **Day 4, Week 2**

The instructional procedures during day four of the research study began with an explanation of the activities Katie would be completing. I explained to Katie that as we did the week before, we would have time to revisit chapter one of *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997), and her graphic organizer before completing the post-reading evaluation. I described to Katie that the “short quiz” consisted of multiple choice and short

response questions that I would again read to her, in order to ensure comprehension of the expectation of the questions. I also explained to Katie that I would continue to take observation notes throughout this lesson as well.

After the brief explanation of the day's procedures, Katie and I began to review the text, *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997). She asked to look at the actual text, along with the index cards I created. I decided to allow her to do so because this text includes black and white pictures that correspond with the chapter. She looked through the pictures and responded to the situations she recalled from the reading. On page 7 she said, "This must be when Harry tickled the other kid and made him say he loves girls." The picture was displaying this activity and I asked Katie if she remembered what was "the kid's" name. She did not know so I reminded her that she actually highlighted this detail on one of the index cards, and that his name was Sidney. Katie and I looked through the rest of the pictures from the text, and then we laid out the index cards in order. Katie decided to read each of the highlighted sentences aloud, and as she did so I noticed her fluency seemed to improve slightly since the last reading. Some of the words that she struggled with were not as difficult in this second read.

After reviewing the text and index cards, Katie and I looked at the graphic organizer that she completed. Katie read her responses that she recorded on the graphic organizer. She read them silently to herself, and although I wrote the correct spellings of certain words underneath her own handwriting she still seemed to struggle reading her own work. I thought again about how I could support her next time with the writing portion of the lesson. The graphic organizer is meant to be a helpful tool for her comprehension of the text, and a support for her post-reading evaluation. For the next lesson I will need to reassess the use of the graphic organizer and the manner in which Katie is asked to complete the organizer. The

reviewing of the text and graphic organizer took a total of about 15-20 minutes; similar to the amount of time we spent on review during day two.

After reviewing the text, index cards, and her notes on the graphic organizer, Katie then completed the second post-reading evaluation (see Figure 4.5). This evaluation was designed to assess her comprehension of the text, along with her ability to decode certain words from the text. To create each post-reading evaluation I used the text, *When Readers Struggle: Teaching that Works* by Fountas and Pinnell (2009). Chapter 17, Teaching for Comprehending: Thinking Before, During, and After Reading was supportive in my development of the comprehension assessment. As I developed the questions for the second post-reading evaluation I was certain to introduce questions involving word solving, and summarizing to support her within the text knowledge (Figure 4.5, Questions: 1, 4, and 6). I also created questions encouraging her to make inferences about the text, to support Katie's thinking beyond the text (Figure 4.5, Questions: 2, and 3). Lastly, I created a question prompting Katie to analyze the text, to support her thinking about the text (Figure 4.5, Question: 5). As I read aloud each question to Katie, she would follow along tracking with her finger. The questions and her responses are depicted in figure 4.5.

**Figure 4.5: Post-Reading Evaluation #2**

Post-Reading Evaluation #2  
Horrible Harry in Room 2B  
By Suzy Kline (1997)  
Chapter 1: Horrible Harry and Me

1. What do you think is the main idea of this chapter?

*Harry is horrible. Harry gets into trouble.*

2. What do you know about Harry's character? Do you know anyone like Harry?

*Harry makes stuff up. Harry makes pranks. Gabriel, because he always makes stuff up a lot and plays pranks.*

3. Why do you think Harry likes to cause trouble?



*Harry likes to cause trouble because it is what he does, sometimes he gets busted and sometimes he doesn't.*

4. On page 7, "Once Harry crawled under my desk to get a broken crayon." What does the underlined word mean? How do you know?

*On your knees, like crawling. I know because crawl/led, I broke it into chunks.*

5. Why do you think the author chose to write about a character like Harry?

*The author wrote about a character like Harry because he is entertaining, and so kids know it's not a good thing to be horrible.*

6. On page 8, "Someday, when he made twenty-four, Harry says his stub people will invade our room." What does the underlined word mean? How do you know?

*The word invade, I think it means to attack or something like in a fight. I know this word because I have seen it before.*

### **Analysis of Post-Reading Evaluation**

The first question in the post-reading evaluation asked Katie to summarize and determine the main idea of the text. She already wrote the main idea on the graphic organizer completed in the previous lesson. As I read this question aloud to her she knew right where to look for the answer, and she picked up the graphic organizer. She read aloud to me what she had written, and I recorded the information.

The second question asked Katie to make an inference about the text. What do you know about Harry's character? Do you know anyone like Harry? This question allowed Katie to make an inference based on the information that she gathered from the first chapter. This question also encourages Katie to create a connection with the text by attaching similar personality characteristics to someone she might know. Her response was simply, "Harry makes stuff up. Harry makes pranks." I asked Katie if there was any other details she would like to add, and she declined. For the second part of this question Katie said that there were several kids that she knew, that were similar to Harry. I asked her if she could elaborate and explain more about one of these children. She said she didn't know exactly how they were

similar so she finally decided to respond with, “Gabriel, because he always makes stuff up a lot and plays pranks.” I felt that Katie’s response for this question was generic and could have used more detail. I also think that we need to work on her ability to restate the question in her response.

The third question asked Katie to make an inference about the text. Why do you think Harry likes to cause trouble? After I read this question aloud I asked Katie if she knew how to restate the question into her answer. She said she was unsure what that meant. I explained that when we are responding to questions about a text it is important to use complete sentences. I said that part of creating a complete sentence is by using part of the question to begin our answer. For this question I gave Katie the sentence starter so that she knew what I meant by restating. I told her to start her response with “Harry likes to cause trouble because...” Katie seemed to understand what restating the question meant but she said that in school they call it, “taking the question word out.” I told her that she was correct, often times when we are restating the questions we are merely taking the question word(s) out of the sentence. After our brief conversation about complete sentence responses, I repeated the question for Katie. She responded after several minutes of think time. During this time she looked through the pictures in the text, and glanced over the index cards. She finally responded with, “Harry likes to cause trouble because it is what he does, sometimes he gets busted and sometimes he doesn’t.” I felt that this response was accurate according to the storyline. I also felt that this question could have allowed a deeper connection to the storyline that Katie hasn’t quite grasped yet.

The fourth question asked Katie to solve the underlined word. On page 7, “Once Harry crawled under my desk to get a broken crayon.” What does the underlined word mean? How do you know? For this question I asked Katie to read the sentence from the text, and I read aloud the corresponding questions. I chose this question because she struggled with this

word in the previous lesson. Katie miscued and read the word “clawed” instead of crawled. I was hoping that she would use one of the decoding strategies that we discussed during lesson two to help her solve this word. In her first attempt at this question she again read the underlined word as “clawed”, after she completed the sentence she said, “that doesn’t make sense.” She was aware that the word she had substituted did not fit in the sentence, although visually the words looked similar. On her next attempt she omitted the underlined word and completed the rest of the sentence. I told her that she chose a very good strategy and I asked her if skipping the unknown word was helpful. Katie said, “Oooh, I think the word is crawled.” I told her that she was correct and I asked her what the word meant, and how she knew. She responded, “On your knees, like crawling. I know because crawl/led, I broke it into chunks.” I explained to her that the strategy she used was skipping the word while reading the sentence. She said that she skipped the word and broke it into chunks too. I felt that Katie was able to successfully use a decoding strategy and this helped her find meaning in the sentence.

The fifth question asked Katie to analyze the author’s choice and the text. Why do you think the author chose to write about a character like Harry? At first Katie said that she didn’t know. I told her that authors write for many different reasons, sometimes they will write to entertain the reader, and sometimes authors write to give the reader information. Katie said that the author was probably doing both. She said the author probably wants to entertain and inform. I asked Katie to create her response to the question by restating the question, and adding some more details to her response. She responded with, “The author wrote about a character like Harry because he is entertaining, and so kids know it is not a good thing to be horrible.” I felt that her response was well developed. Although we spent time to talk out her response, I think that with more practice she will be able to communicate her ability to produce higher level thinking more easily.

The sixth, and last question, asked Katie to solve a word from the text that she had trouble reading in the previous lesson. On page 8, “Someday, when he made twenty-four, Harry says his stub people will invade our room.” What does the underlined word mean? How do you know? In lesson three, the word “invade” required Katie to use her decoding strategy of breaking into chunks. I was curious to see if Katie would be able to solve this word without help the second time around, or if she would need to decode the word again. Katie read the sentence from the text, as I read aloud the corresponding questions. When she read the sentence, she paused when she came to the word “invade” she then repeated the beginning of the sentence and read the word “in-vade, invade”. I was pleased that Katie was able to solve the word again, and she did not take as much time to decode the word as she had in the previous lesson. I told her that she did a great job of reading that sentence, and then I asked her what the word invade meant, and how she knew this. I asked her to remember to respond in a complete sentence. She said, “The word invade, I think it means to attack or something like in a fight. I know this word because I have seen it before.” I felt that this response was significant. I think that it demonstrated her ability to comprehend information that was far beyond her “reading level”. I think that her fluency and word decoding ability don’t correlate to her comprehension level. I think that in the future I could ask more difficult questions about the text.

Overall the post-reading evaluation on day four took about 45 minutes. Katie again seemed to take an extended amount of time with her responses, although this time I was more lenient with my wait time. I was not rushing her responses, and we were able to discuss any misunderstandings she might have.

### **What Went Well**

Again, I felt that the oral responses to the questions were supportive in her development and formulation of an answer. I intend to continue to allow Katie to respond

orally to the post-reading evaluations. I think that our conversations also directly support her ability to comprehend the questions and formulate a well-thought out response. I believe I was able to give the appropriate amount of wait time before I interjected with a comment, as Katie tends to take her time in her responses. I noticed that the post-reading evaluation allowed Katie to open up more about her thoughts and her misunderstandings. I saw this through her ability to create longer responses and how she was more interactive in our conversations. I also believe that enforcing the use of complete sentences and restating the question is also supportive to her comprehension. I will continue to require this response format.

### **What I Would do Differently**

The graphic organizer was used as more of support for Katie than it was in the first post-reading evaluation, however I think that we still might be able to improve upon the usage of this writing and comprehension tool. I think that I need to be adamant about Katie adding more details and restating the question in her response. I think that the introduction of this type of formulated response went well, but we need to work more on this concept together in the next post-reading evaluation. In lesson two, Katie was able to stay focused while reading for the majority of the time we spent together, it is possible that the use of the highlighter, and the ability to move around the room was supportive in her focusing ability. I think that the extensive wait time needed to answer questions may be related to her lack of focus during the post-reading evaluations. I might need to determine a way to bring the hands-on motivation piece into the evaluations. Katie is able to demonstrate a much higher level of thinking and comprehension if given the opportunity, based on the results of her answers during this second post-reading evaluation. I intend to enrich her ability to make inferences and analyze the text, through more difficult questions in the last two post-reading evaluations.

### **Day 5, Week 3**

In the day five and week three of the research study, I conducted the third hands-on literacy lesson with Katie. She completed another graphic organizer, and I completed observation and field notes. The instructional procedures during day five of the research study began with an explanation of the reading passage, along with the clarification of the use of the stress ball. The story used for lesson three was, *Horrible Harry in Room 2B* by Suzy Kline (1997). Katie chose this text in the previous lesson. For this lesson Katie read chapter two, Horrible Harry, the Stub People, and Halloween (p.14-26). For the hands-on portion of this lesson, Katie was asked to read the provided reading passage while holding a stress ball. She was told that she could squeeze or play with the stress ball in any way while she reads. She would also use the stress ball to toss to me. Katie will toss the ball every time she encounters a piece of important information in this chapter. When Katie has discovered an important detail in the chapter she will toss me the ball, I will ask her to verbally describe what exactly is important in the passage, and I will record her words verbatim. Once the passage is complete, she will review the notations that were recorded by her request, and organize this information on a graphic organizer.

As Katie began reading chapter two aloud, she seemed to be enjoying the use of the stress ball. At first it looked as if the stress ball might become a distraction to her because she was tossing it in the air slightly and the ball rolled onto the floor twice. This caused Katie to get up out of her seat to retrieve the ball. However, once she encountered her first important piece of information in the text, I noticed she was able to focus more on the text and less on the novelty of the stress ball.

For the first notation, Katie stopped reading and said, "I think I found something important." She tossed me the stress ball. I asked her to describe to me the important detail,

and I would write the notation down for her. She read a sentence from the text on page 15, “We put the first pair of stub people in Song Lee’s desk while she was up at the pencil sharpener.” I asked Katie if there was anything else she would like to add, and she declined. I reminded her that as she reads, she might want to summarize some of the information that could be important. I told her that she does not always need to use quotations directly from the text. She acknowledged this and continued to read. On page 15, Katie struggled with the word, “invasion”. She used the decoding strategy of breaking the word into chunks. She said “in-vade... in-vadon... invasion.” I was pleased with her ability to correctly identify and decode this word unassisted. It did not seem to even disturb her reading pace too much.

Katie’s use of the stress ball became less drastic with much smaller movements for the duration of the text. She merely squeezed the ball slightly while rolling it between her fingers. It did not become a distraction to her as it had seemed to be in the very beginning of the chapter. The second time Katie paused to provide an important detail, she again quoted from the text. “But when Sidney put his arm in the sleeve, the stub people fell through and landed on the floor. Sidney never saw them” (p. 17). I jotted down this notation, and Katie continued reading.

I noticed that each time Katie finished a page in the text, she spent about 30 seconds or so investigating the pictures before turning to the next page. At first I was unsure if she was looking back at the information in the attempt to summarize an important detail, or if she was confused about something in the text. I asked her if she needed any help and she replied, “No, I’m looking at the pictures.” As much as I wanted to hurry her along in the text, so as to not forget what it was that she had just read, I decided that it was important for her to search for information in the pictures. This activity may be helpful in Katie’s comprehension of the text. Katie’s third notation was on page 18, “What’s this?” Miss Mackle said when she saw the stub people. Harry took his fingers out of his ears. I did too. “How cute!” Miss Mackle

exclaimed as she held one up.” As Katie read this quotation for me to write down, she miscued on the word exclaimed. Katie said, “explored”. Before she moved on in the text I asked her to read the word again, and I pointed to “exclaimed” in the text. She read it has she had before, “explored.” I told Katie that the word was actually “exclaimed”. I told her that she did a great job of noticing the beginning and ending sounds in this word but that the middle part of the word did not match what she had read. Katie attempted to read back the word to me, and kept repeating, “ex-claimed”. I told her that the word exclaimed sounds similar to the word explained. After this brief interruption she repeated the sentence again, without a miscue, and then continued to read.

On page 21, Katie’s fourth notation was, “Cheer up,” I said, “tomorrow’s Halloween. That’s your favorite holiday. You’ll be real scary then.” After this notation I asked Katie to try to summarize the information for the next important detail. I told her to put the story into her own words instead of quoting directly from the text. She agreed that she would that the next time. On this page of the text Katie struggled with several words. When she encountered the word, “Frankenstein” she stopped reading and looked to me for help. I told her that although this word looks very long it’s not actually a difficult word. I asked her to tell me any parts she knew. She said, “Frank... franken?” I reminded her that just before in this text they were discussing Halloween. She read “Frankenstein” correctly and continued to read. She had similar issues with the words, “skeleton” and “vampire”. I did not anticipate that Katie would struggle with these words. I wondered, if in the next chapter she might be more successful if we previewed some of the vocabulary before reading.

For Katie’s fifth notation, she did a good job of summarizing the information on page 23 and 24 of the text. She asked me to write, “Halloween was today, and everyone was waiting for Harry to come to school but he was late.” I thought that the information and details she chose to include were important and well thought out. I was happy that she was able to



successfully summarize the information without using the exact wording from the text. I told her that she did a good job of understanding and summarizing the important information. Katie said, “I had to think about it.” I noticed the long pause in between her reading but I assumed that she was just looking at the pictures again. I was happy that this activity was allowing Katie to dig deeper into the chapter and really monitor her own understanding of the text.

For Katie’s sixth and final notation, she again quoted from the text. On page 26, “A head popped out of the snake skin, and flashed his white teeth. “Harry!” everyone shouted. “You’re late,” Miss Mackle said.” This chapter was about 13 pages in length. Although Katie only found six important details I felt that all of the notations were relevant and pertinent to the storyline in chapter two. I also felt that her attempt to summarize the text was successful and highlighted her ability to think within and about the text.

Next, Katie completed the graphic organizer (see figure 4.6). Before completion we reviewed the six important details that she asked me to note as she read. This time I allowed Katie to state her ideas orally as I wrote them down on the graphic organizer for her. She seemed to create a more formulated and calculated response when she is only required to worry about expressing her ideas, instead of writing the ideas down and spelling them correctly. When asked what the main idea was in chapter two, Katie responded, “Harry was trying to invade the classroom with the stub people, and he tried to scare the class with his snake costume.” Katie did a great job of summarizing the information from the chapter to create the main idea. For detail box #1 she expressed, “Horrible Harry was trying to *invasioned* the classroom but it did not work, no one screamed.” I explained to Katie that *invasioned* was not a word. I told her that she might be combining the words, invade and invasion. She agreed and she said she’s not sure which word she meant. I told her that she could either say, “Horrible Harry was trying to invade the classroom,” or “Horrible Harry

invaded the classroom.” Katie chose, “Horrible Harry was trying to invade the classroom but it did not work, no one screamed.” I felt that this was a good choice. For detail box #2 Katie said, “Harry put his stub people on Miss Mackle’s desk, she thought they were cute.” I felt that this detail was appropriate, and I also liked how Katie chose to summarize one of the notations she had asked me to write down. For detail box #3 Katie said, “Harry was late to school because he was working on his costume, and everyone screamed.” I thought that this detail was a little disjointed and could have used some more information. Overall, I think that Katie was able to understand the chapter very well, and I think that that was shown in her responses in the graphic organizer. Lesson three took a total of forty-five minutes to complete.

**Figure 4.6: Graphic Organizer #3**

Main Idea		
Harry was trying to invade the classroom with the stub people, and he tried to scare the class with his snake costume.		
Detail	Detail	Detail
Horrible Harry was trying to invade the classroom but it did not work, no one screamed.	Harry put his stub people on miss mackle's desk, she thought they were cute.	Harry was late to school because he was working on his costume, and everyone screamed.

## **What Went Well**

The stress ball seemed to be a successful hands-on tool for Katie. She was able to stay focused while reading, and seemed to enjoy the tactile sensation of holding the stress ball in her hand and squeezing it while rolling the ball between her fingers. She said that the stress ball reminded her of an eraser that she likes to play with at school. Her teacher allows her to hold the eraser in her hand while in ELA and math class. I felt that having Katie pick out important information as she read was successful. I think that next time we do a similar activity we should work on getting more from the text, and pulling out more details and information. This activity allowed Katie to stop and think about what she was reading, and she really seemed to gain a deeper comprehension of the text. Katie is decoding successfully on her own most of the time. I noticed that she doesn't need the decoding strategy poster anymore as a reminder. I feel that because I forced the responsibility of deciphering the words on her own, she rose to the challenge and started to perform much better and she has been miscueing much less. However, she does rely on the chunking strategy, and sometimes this strategy doesn't always work. I think I need to encourage her to choose other ways of decoding information in the text, if her strategy is unsuccessful.

## **What I Would do Differently**

In an effort to not interrupt her reading I chose not to discuss her reasoning for choosing each detail. Instead, I analyzed this information on my own. It may have been more enlightening to hear her reasoning at the time of the note taking. I think I might need to determine a different way to understand her note taking and comprehension process. I would also like to preview the vocabulary before reading the next chapter. Katie was showing difficulty reading the Halloween inspired words, Frankenstein, skeleton, and vampire. I think

that previewing the chapter will help with her understanding of the vocabulary she will encounter, and her overall comprehension of the chapter.

### **Day 6, Week 3**

The instructional procedures during day six of the research study began with an explanation of the activities Katie would be completing. I explained to Katie that just as we had in the previous weeks, we would have time to revisit chapter two of *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997), the notes she had taken, and her graphic organizer, before completing the third post-reading evaluation. I described to Katie that the “short quiz” consisted of multiple choice and short response questions that I would again read to her, in order to ensure comprehension of the expectation of the questions. I also explained to Katie that I would continue to take observation notes throughout this lesson as well.

After the brief explanation of the day’s procedures, Katie and I began to review chapter two of the text, *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997). She chose to look at the notes we had taken before flipping through the text. She read aloud each of the six notations and made comments about how she remembered these parts in the text. She said, “Oh yes I remember when the kids were waiting for Harry to come to school, he came dressed up as a snake.” After rereading the six notations she had made, Katie decided to look through chapter two in the book. She enjoys looking at the pictures and explaining what each one is depicting. On page 16 of the text, Song Lee is playing with the stub people that Harry created to scare her. Katie said, “This is when Harry tried to scare one of the girls and no one screamed.” I agreed with Katie and told her that Song Lee was the name of the girl in his class. On page 20 of the text, the picture shows Harry with his head down on his desk and he has an angry face. Katie said, “This is when Harry is mad because no one screamed.” I think that Katie’s ability

to recall the information from the text based on the pictures is helpful for her comprehension of the text.

After reviewing the notations and the pictures in the text, Katie and I looked at the graphic organizer that she completed. Katie read her responses that I recorded for her on the graphic organizer. She was able to read this information fluently. I think that the slight modifications I am continuing to make with the graphic organizer are supporting her comprehension of the text. The reviewing of the notations, pictures in the text, and graphic organizer took about 15 minutes.

After the review Katie completed the third post-reading evaluation (see Figure 4.7). This evaluation was designed to assess her comprehension of the text, along with her ability to decode certain words from the text. To create each post-reading evaluation I used the text, *When Readers Struggle: Teaching that Works* by Fountas and Pinnell (2009). Chapter 17, *Teaching for Comprehending: Thinking Before, During, and After Reading* was supportive in my development of the comprehension assessment. As I developed the questions for the third post-reading evaluation I was certain to introduce questions involving word solving, and summarizing to support her within the text knowledge (Figure 4.7, Questions: 1, 4, and 6). I also created questions encouraging her to make inferences about the text, to support Katie's thinking beyond the text (Figure 4.7, Questions: 2, and 3). Lastly, I created a question prompting Katie to analyze the text, to support her thinking about the text (Figure 4.7, Question: 5). As I read aloud each question to Katie, she would follow along tracking with her finger. The questions and her responses are depicted in figure 4.7.

### **Figure 4.7: Post-Reading Evaluation #3**

Post-Reading Evaluation #3  
Horrible Harry in Room 2B  
By Suzy Kline (1997)  
Chapter 2: Horrible Harry, the Stub People, and Halloween

1. What do you think is the main idea of this chapter?

*The main idea of this chapter is that Harry was trying to invade the classroom with the stub people, and he tried to scare the class with his snake costume.*

2. Miss Mackle thought that Harry's stub people were "cute", do you think that is the reaction that he wanted from her? Why or why not?

*No it was not, because he wanted her to scream instead of saying they were adorable.*

3. Why do you think Harry's classmates were so interested in what Harry was going to be for Halloween?

*They were interested because they wanted to see if Harry could pull off a scary costume.*

4. On page 16, "When Harry and I got permission to go to the bathroom, we stopped in the hallway." What does the underlined word mean? How do you know?

*The word means that you can go wherever you want to but you still have to ask somebody. I know this word because I looked at the parts I know, per/mis/sion.*

5. What do you think the author might write about in the next chapter?

*The author will write about another story with Harry.*

6. On page 18, "How cute!" Miss Mackle exclaimed as she help one up." What does the underlined word mean? How do you know?

*The word exclaimed means the same as said. I know because I read it last time.*

### **Analysis of Post-Reading Evaluation**

The first question in the post-reading evaluation asked Katie to summarize and determine the main idea of the text. She wrote the main idea on the graphic organizer we completed in the previous lesson. As I read this question aloud to her I reminded her to restate the question and create a complete sentence. Katie responded, "The main idea of this chapter is that Harry was trying to invade the classroom with the stub people, and he tried to scare the class with his snake costume."

The second question asked Katie to make an inference about the text. Miss Mackle thought that Harry's stub people were "cute", do you think that is the reaction that he wanted from her? Why or why not? This question requires Katie to make an inference based on the text. Katie responded that he definitely didn't want her to respond that way. I asked Katie to elaborate, and explain why she felt this way. She said that Harry was waiting for people to scream. That's why he kept putting the stub people on their desks. I agreed with Katie's understanding of the text and asked her to put this information into a complete sentence. She said, "No it was not, because he wanted her to scream instead of saying it was adorable."

The third question asked Katie to make an inference about the text. Why do you think Harry's classmates were so interested in what Harry was going to be for Halloween? At first Katie was unsure of this question. I reminded her that on one of her notations she asked me to write, "Halloween was today, and everyone was waiting for Harry to come to school but he was late." I asked her if she remembered why she asked me to write down that important detail. She said that the kids were all probably disappointed that his pranks didn't work with the stub people. I told Katie that that was probably true, and I repeated the question to her. Katie responded, "They were interested because they wanted to see if Harry could pull off a scary costume." I thought that this response was accurate and I agreed with her thought.

The fourth question asked Katie to solve the underlined word. On page 16, "When Harry and I got permission to go to the bathroom, we stopped in the hallway." What does the underlined word mean? How do you know? For this question I asked Katie to read the sentence from the text, and I read aloud the corresponding questions. I chose this sentence because she did a great job decoding this word in the previous lesson, and I wondered if she would be able to explain her thinking. Katie read this sentence slowly and without much fluency. However, she read permission perfectly without having to break the word into chunks as she did previously. I read the corresponding questions again for Katie and she

responded, “The word means that you can go wherever you want to but you still have to ask somebody. I know this word because I looked at the parts I know per/mis/sion.” I felt that Katie’s response was accurate and I was pleased that she was able to recall how she decoded this word previously, even though this time she was able to read the word without pausing. I think that it is important that Katie is able to revisit words that she read successfully along with words that were read unsuccessfully.

The fifth question asked Katie to analyze the author’s choice and the text. What do you think the author might write about in the next chapter? Katie was confused by this question at first. She told me that she had no idea, but that she was excited to read the next chapter. I told her that this question is asking her to make a prediction based on the story and what she already knew from the previous chapters. She thought about it for a short time and then responded, “The author will write about another story with Harry.” I asked her if she could provide any more detail about what the author’s story might be about. Katie said she didn’t know. I thought that Katie would be more successful with making predictions. I think this might be something we could work on in the future.

The sixth, and last question, asked Katie to solve a word from the text that she had trouble reading in the previous lesson. On page 18, “How cute!” Miss Mackle exclaimed as she help one up.” What does the underlined word mean? How do you know? Katie read the sentence from the text, and I read aloud the corresponding questions. Before Katie read the sentence, she noticed the underlined word, and said, “I remember this word from the other day.” I asked her if she could read the sentence for me. She told me that she remembered seeing the word, but could not remember how to say it. I told her to try her best. Katie gave several attempts at the underlined word before solving the word correctly. She said, “ex... examined... ex... plained... exclimbed...” I asked Katie if any of those words would make sense in the sentence and she said no. Finally Katie remembered the word as “exclaimed”.



Katie responded, “The word exclaimed means the same as said. I know because I read it last time.” I found it interesting that Katie was able to define the word, although she had difficulty pronouncing the word. She seemed to really struggle forming the necessary sounds in her mouth.

Overall the third post-reading evaluation and review took about 45 minutes. She was given the stress ball again for the completion of the post-reading evaluation. As she had in lesson three, Katie was squeezing the ball with small movements and was rolling the ball between her fingers. I noticed that the movements with the stress ball were consistent throughout our time together, and these movements almost seemed to be supportive to her ability to focus.

### **What Went Well**

Katie always seems to surprise me with her responses to the post-reading evaluations. I think that the conversations that we have are so beneficial to her comprehension. I almost feel as if the questions I created are merely conversation starters and I should not always require a specific response. However, I do like to challenge her to come up with a solid answer. I think that her ability to communicate orally is much more developed than her ability to communicate through her writing. I wonder how this affects her in the classroom. I also wonder if this is something that we might be able to develop in our last lesson activity together.

### **What I Would do Differently**

Question five asks Katie to make a prediction based on the previous chapters. She is unable to do this with much detail. I think that she needs to work on the ability to make predictions based on the information in the chapter. I would also like to challenge Katie further with the questions in the post-reading evaluations. It is hard to truly examine the effect of the stress ball on Katie’s ability to attend to the information. In the future I would

like to use the stress ball consistently with several lessons to gain a better understanding of the effect on Katie and her literary success.

#### **Day 7, Week 4**

For day seven of the research study, I conducted the follow-up parent survey, the fourth and final hands-on literacy activity, along with observation and field notes. The follow-up parent survey was provided for both parents upon my arrival to Katie's home for lesson four. I allowed the parents approximately 45 minutes to complete the survey, as this was the amount of time that Katie and I spent on the last hands-on activity.

The instructional procedures during day seven of the research study began with an explanation of the reading passage, along with the clarification of the use of the post-it notes. During the final lesson, Katie was asked to read chapter three in the text, *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997). Chapter three is titled, Harry's Triple Revenge (p. 27-35). As Katie read the text, every time she encountered a piece of information she deemed important in response to the reading passage, she was asked to write that information onto a Post-it note, and place the Post-it note in the book. Once chapter three was complete, we would review the information that was recorded on the Post-it notes, and organize this information on the graphic organizer used in the previous lessons. Before we began the lesson Katie asked if I would write on the Post-it notes for her, as I have scribed for her in the previous lessons. I asked her what her reasoning was for not wanting to write her own notations. Katie responded, "The Post-it's are too small, I can't write small, and I don't write good." The Post-it notes were the normal size and she could definitely write small enough on them. Katie is not usually reluctant to completing activities as asked, so I agreed to allow her to orally communicate her ideas as I wrote them on the Post-it notes. I realized that this might hinder my ability to analyze her work, although I did not want to frustrate her or complicate

her ability to formulate her responses. My writing support in the previous lessons may have become too helpful, and I was not allowing her to challenge herself with writing down her ideas. My slight modifications had become a crutch for Katie.

As Katie began reading aloud, I noticed that she was fairly inconsistent with the words that she miscued, and the words that she could read with correct pronunciation and fluency. On pages 27 and 28, Katie struggled with the word “lowered” (bottom of page 27) although she was able to read the word “canary” (top of page 28) perfectly. Instead of reading “lowered” Katie read “lammered”, she read this so quickly I almost did not note this as a miscue. I found this inconsistency to be interesting because “lowered” has the potential to be easily chunked, and “canary” is not as easily phonetically chunked. It is likely that Katie has seen the word canary before, and had the ability to pull it from her memory while reading this text.

For her first Post-it note, Katie stopped on page 28 and asked me to write, “Harry was mad at Sidney for calling him a canary, and putting a sticker on his chair.” I was happy that Katie decided to summarize the information from the text for this notation. In lesson three she seemed to struggle with putting the information from the text into her own words. In order to not completely hinder the hands-on portion of this lesson, I instructed Katie to place the Post-it notes in the text from where she had gathered the information. Katie placed the post-it note on page 28 near the top of the page.

Katie placed the second Post-it note on the bottom of page 28. This note read, “Harry was double mad because Sidney put a canary sticker on his lunch box.” I asked Katie was she meant by “double mad”. She responded, “Harry was more mad than before.” I wrote the notation as she suggested but I expressed to her that in language we do not usually refer to being more mad, as being “double mad”. She agreed that she had not heard this before, but she was not sure what to put and the word “double” was on the page in the text.

The third Post-it note was from page 29 in the text. Katie asked me to write, “Harry went to the library.” I was not sure if this post-it note was important based on the storyline of chapter three but I was encouraged that this was the third notation Katie had made without quoting directly from the chapter.

On page 30, Katie struggled with the word, “Tyrannosaurus”. I should have anticipated Katie struggling with this word, and previewed this word before reading the text. Katie attempted to break this word into chunks that she knew. She said, “Ty...rant...tyrants... I have no idea.” I assisted her with this word because she was getting frustrated very quickly. I told her that the word was tyrannosaurus, and we discussed that this was a type of dinosaur. She said that she had never heard of this dinosaur before. Katie created her fourth post-it note on the top of page 30, “The librarian gave Harry a book.” I asked Katie if she thought we should add the name of the book on the Post-it note. She said yes, so I added “*Terrible Tyrannosaurus Rex*” to the Post-it note.

On page 32, Katie asked me to note, “Harry was mad because Sidney put a canary sticker on his book.” Katie placed the fifth Post-it on the top of page 32. She was doing a great job of summarizing the information so far in the chapter. On page 32, Katie also miscued on the word “gritted”. She said “grinded” instead. This miscue did not interfere with the meaning of the text. The sentence was, “Harry gritted his teeth and carefully pulled the canary sticker off the plastic book cover.”

On page 33, Katie created her sixth Post-it note. She asked me to write, “Harry squished Sidney’s hand and he thought it was a slug.” As I started to copy this down, Katie looked again at the text and told me to write instead that Harry squished a banana into his hand. I felt that Katie did a great job of knowing when to add more detail, and I agreed that this detail was important to add. She placed this Post-it in the middle of page 33. At the end of page 33 Katie miscued on the word “especially”. She struggled with this word, but was aware that the

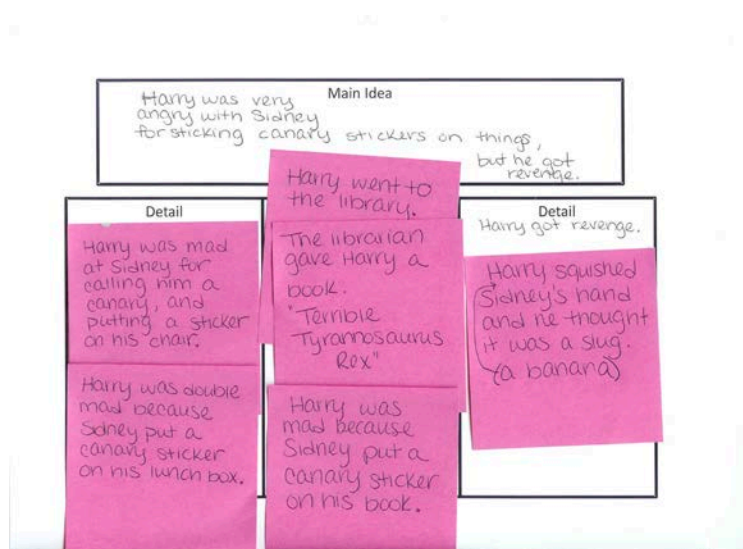
words she was reading instead, would not make sense in the sentence. Katie said, “Excited for triple revenge... expended... espex... experiment...” at this point she looked at the page and there was a long pause before she looked to me to give her the word. I felt that she gave a fair attempt at decoding the word and I told her the word was “especially”. She repeated the word several times before continuing to read the text.

Katie was able to create six Post-it notes, and placed them in the text where she gathered the information. Although I had intended for her to use the Post-it note activity as more of a hands-on lesson, her ability to summarize the details in the text, and verbalize them to me were successful. When Katie placed the Post-it notes on the pages in the text she was deliberate in her positioning.

After reading the text, Katie and I used the Post-it notes to create the graphic organizer (see figure 4.8). I asked Katie to take the Post-it notes out of the book and place them directly into the boxes in the graphic organizer. I told her that we could also add detail to these boxes, if the post-it notes were not enough information. We began with creating the main idea of chapter three. Katie thought about this for some time, while analyzing the Post-it notes. She finally decided, “Harry was very angry with Sidney for sticking canary stickers on things, but he got revenge.” I thought that this main idea was accurate and supportive to the overall theme of chapter three. In detail box #1 Katie placed Post-it notes 1, 2, and 3. Post-it note 1: Harry was mad at Sidney for calling him a canary, and putting a sticker on his chair. Post-it note 2: Harry was double mad because Sidney put a canary sticker on his lunch box. Post-it note 3: Harry went to the library. I told Katie that post-it note 3 did not really match the other two, and suggested that we move this note to detail box #2. Katie agreed and moved the post-it note 3. In detail box #2 she also added post-it notes 4 and 5. Post-it note 4: The librarian gave Harry a book. Post-it note 5: Harry was mad because Sidney put a canary sticker on his book. I felt that all three of these details made sense and correlated together, so we moved on

to detail box #3. Katie placed Post-it note 6 in the last box. Post-it note 6: Harry squished a banana into Sidney's hand and he thought it was a slug. I asked Katie if she could think of anything she might want to add into the detail boxes. She said that detail box #3 needed something else because it only had one Post-it. I agreed that we could add to this box. She decided after some think time that we should write, "Harry got revenge," on top of the Post-it note. Katie created the graphic organizer very thoughtfully in this last lesson. I think that she made good choices based on the Post-it note placement, and she created a great overview of chapter three.

**Figure 4.8: Graphic Organizer #4**



This lesson took about 45 minutes to complete. At the end of the lesson, I collected the follow-up survey that was given to the parents upon my arrival.

The questions from the follow-up parent survey are:

1. What do you know *now* about the hands-on approach in regards to literacy learning?
2. What types of hands-on activities does your child engage in, and how has that changed *after* the research study?
3. How do you think the hands-on approach *has* supported your student's reading abilities, and her challenges associated with ADHD?

The parents' responses to the follow-up survey provided data about the changes in the home environment, and provided vital information on the value of this research study and their child's success in literacy. The parents' response to the first survey question, what do you know *now* about the hands-on approach in regards to literacy learning was; "We can see that the traditional way of teaching reading does not have a lot of moving around, and hands-on activities can keep [Katie's] attention better than just reading and doing questions."

In the second survey question, what types of hands-on activities does your child engage in, and how has that changed *after* the research study? They wrote, "Swimming, dance, and cooking. [Katie] has been doing a lot of her reading homework at home now instead of at school and she likes to read on the exercise ball."

For the third and final survey question, how do you think the hands-on approach *has* supported your student's reading abilities, and her challenges associated with ADHD, the parents responded "[Katie] reads at home now and she used to never do this and would only read at school. We are very happy with this!"

### **What Went Well**

This lesson was similar in format to lesson three. Katie was asked to stop and make notations throughout the lesson. Although it was not my intention to create two similar lessons I believe that this gave Katie an advantage in this last lesson. Her ability to determine more significant notations was greatly improved I believe this is because of the practice from the previous lesson. In the follow-up survey, the parents revealed some small yet significant changes in the home environment. Katie has been completing her reading homework at home now instead of at school and the parents also stated that she enjoys reading while sitting on the exercise ball. I wonder if the ball is still a novelty to Katie, or if it truly is supporting her ability to attend to the task of reading because it is stimulating her need for movement while learning.

## **What I Would do Differently**

I should have allowed Katie to write down notes independently, even though it can be a struggle at times. This modification I had chosen may not have been overly beneficial to her success in literacy, although I believe it allowed her to be more successful in this research study. For this lesson in particular, her choosing not to write on the post-it notes directly interfered with the hands-on portion of the lesson.

At first it seemed to be an anomaly that Katie would struggle with a word like “lowered” and could so casually read the word “canary”. With further analysis I have decided that Katie relies very heavily on her ability to instantaneously identify words while reading. I do not think that she has conceptualized the idea that reading is a meaning making activity, and not so simply a regurgitation of the words on the page in the text. I think that if I was able to conduct future lessons with Katie, I would address this idea with her through focusing on the importance of the words on the page, and supporting her ability to monitor her own comprehension of the reading passage as she is reading.

## **Day 8, Week 4**

The instructional procedures during day eight of the research study began with an explanation of the activities Katie would be completing. I explained to Katie that just as we had in the previous weeks, we would have time to revisit chapter three of *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997), and the Post-it notes she had created and placed on her graphic organizer, before completing the fourth post-reading evaluation. I described to Katie that the “short quiz” consisted of multiple choice and short response questions that I would again read to her, in order to ensure comprehension of the expectation of the questions. I also



explained to Katie that I would continue to take observation notes during our time together as well.

After the brief explanation of the day's procedures, Katie and I began to review chapter three of the text, *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997). As she has in previous lessons, Katie gravitated towards the pictures in chapter three. On page 27 she said, "These are the canary stickers." On page 29 she said, "This was when Harry found the sticker on his lunch box." On page 31 she said, "I think this is the library, because of the books." On page 34 she said, "This was when he put a banana in Sidney's hand." As Katie turned to find the pictures on each page she paused and looked as if she was analyzing the pictures very thoroughly before she described the page.

After reviewing the text, Katie and I looked at the graphic organizer that she completed by placing Post-it notes into the boxes on the organizer. Katie read the main idea and the Post-it notes aloud as we reviewed. We had a short discussion about the notations. I asked Katie why she thought that this chapter was titled, Harry's Triple Revenge. At first she was unsure, and said that she didn't know. I asked her to reread her notes, and then think about the meaning of the title. She still was unsure so I read her three of the Post-it notes they were, "Harry was mad at Sidney for calling him a canary, and putting a sticker on his chair. Harry was double mad because Sidney put a canary sticker on his lunch box. Harry was mad because Sidney put a canary sticker on his book." I told her that Sidney puts a sticker on Harry's things three different times. Katie thought about this and decided that the reason the chapter was titled, Harry's Triple Revenge was because "Harry got revenged because Sidney did three things to pick on Harry." I wanted to have this conversation with Katie because I think that it is important for her to realize that the title of the chapter often times gives the reader a clue about the main idea of the chapter. The reviewing of the text and Post-it notes on the graphic organizer took about 15 minutes.

After the review Katie completed the fourth post-reading evaluation (see Figure 4.9). This evaluation was designed to assess her comprehension of the text, along with her ability to decode certain words from the text. To create each post-reading evaluation I used the text, *When Readers Struggle: Teaching that Works* by Fountas and Pinnell (2009). Chapter 17, Teaching for Comprehending: Thinking Before, During, and After Reading was supportive in my development of the comprehension assessment. As I developed the questions for the fourth post-reading evaluation I was certain to introduce questions involving word solving, and summarizing to support her within the text knowledge (Figure 4.9, Questions: 1, 4, and 6). I also created questions encouraging her to make inferences about the text, to support Katie's thinking beyond the text (Figure 4.9, Questions: 2, and 3). Lastly, I created a question prompting Katie to analyze the text, to support her thinking about the text (Figure 4.9, Question: 5). As I read aloud each question to Katie, she followed along tracking with her finger. The questions and her responses are depicted in figure 4.9.

#### **Figure 4.9: Post-Reading Evaluation #4**

Post-Reading Evaluation #4  
Horrible Harry in Room 2B  
By Suzy Kline (1997)  
Chapter 3: Harry's Triple Revenge

1. What do you think is the main idea of this chapter?

*The main idea is Harry was very angry at Sidney for sticking canary stickers on things, but he got revenge.*

2. Why do you think Sidney put the canary sticker on Harry's chair?

*I think Sidney did this because he likes to pick on Harry because Harry is crazy.*

3. How do you think the librarian, Mrs. Michaelson, knew that Harry would like the book, *Terrible Tyrannosaurus Rex*?

*The librarian knew he would like it because Harry likes weird stuff.*

4. On page 27-28, "Harry lowered his eyebrows. "I know what the other stickers are. Don't you Doug?" What does the underlined word mean? How do you know?

*The word means like lowering, I know because I broke it apart into low/er/ed.*

5. The next chapter is titled, Horrible Harry and the Thanksgiving Play. What do you think the author might write about in this next chapter?

*In this next chapter the author will write about how Harry messes up the Thanksgiving Day play.*

6. On page 32, “Harry gritted his teeth and carefully took the canary sticker off the plastic book cover.” What does the underlined word mean? How do you know?

*The word means like grinded, I know this because I thought this yesterday but it’s not the same word.*

### **Analysis of Post-Reading Evaluation**

The first question in the post-reading evaluation asked Katie to summarize and determine the main idea of the text. She wrote the main idea on the graphic organizer we completed in the previous lesson. As I read this question aloud to her I reminded her to restate the question and create a complete sentence. Katie responded, “Harry was very angry at Sidney for sticker canary stickers on things, but he got revenge.” Katie used the graphic organizer to answer this question.

The second question asked Katie to make an inference about the text. Why do you think Sidney put the canary sticker on Harry’s chair? This question requires Katie to make an inference based on the text. Katie thought about this question for a long time. I was concerned that she may not be totally focused on the question, so I prompted her again by saying, “well, what do you think?” Katie said that there could be a few reasons but she responded, “I think Sidney did this because he likes to pick on Harry because Harry is crazy.” I felt that this was a correct response although I was curious about what Katie meant by “Harry is crazy”. When I asked her this she said that she did not know but Harry just was crazy. I thought she might be referring to Harry’s reactions to things so we discussed this possibility and Katie agreed. She said, “Harry is dramatic.”

The third question asked Katie to make an inference about the text. How do you think the librarian, Mrs. Michaelson, knew that Harry would like the book, *Terrible Tyrannosaurus Rex*? At first Katie said that Harry would like it because all boys like dinosaurs. I told Katie that although this might generally be true, there might be another reason that the librarian would choose this book for Harry. Katie then said, "Harry has read it before?" I told Katie that the librarian might have been thinking about Harry's interests when picking out this book. Katie thought about this for a few moments and then responded, "The librarian knew he would like it because Harry likes weird stuff." I felt that this response was fairly accurate but I was hoping that Katie would be able to make a deeper connection through the text.

The fourth question asked Katie to solve the underlined word. On page 27-28, "Harry lowered his eyebrows. "I know what the other stickers are. Don't you Doug?" What does the underlined word mean? How do you know? For this question I asked Katie to read the sentence from the text, and I read aloud the corresponding questions. I chose this sentence because Katie read, "lammered" instead of "lowered" in lesson four. Considering that this was Katie's fourth time taking the post-reading evaluations she was becoming wise to my strategy of using words that she had struggled with in the previous lesson. Before responding to this question she decided to ask about the reasoning behind my question choice. I told her that I chose this sentence from the text because I thought this word was a word that she would need to think about before reading correctly. She told me she remembered this sentence from chapter three and that this word was not that hard to read. Katie began to read the sentence and read the entire sentence fluently. I was fairly surprised by this because the words I had selected in the previous post-reading evaluations were not so easily read. Katie responded to the corresponding questions, "The word means like lowering, I know because I broke it apart into low/er/ed."

The fifth question asked Katie to analyze the author's choice and the text. The next chapter is titled, Horrible Harry and the Thanksgiving Play. What do you think the author might write about in this next chapter? Katie thought about this question for a short time and responded, "In this next chapter the author will write about how Harry messes up the Thanksgiving Day play." I asked Katie if she could make any predictions about how exactly Harry might mess up the play. Katie said that she did not know. I prompted Katie by asking her what types of things Harry has done in the previous chapters that might give a clue. She said, "He will play a prank or something." I think that with more practice Katie will get better at creating predictions based on her reading.

The sixth, and last question, asked Katie to solve a word from the text that she had trouble reading in the previous lesson. On page 32, "Harry gritted his teeth and carefully took the canary sticker off the book cover." What does the underlined word mean? How do you know? Katie read the sentence from the text, and I read aloud the corresponding questions. Katie read the word "gritted" as "grinded", just as she had the day before. I told her the correct word, and we discussed the meaning of gritted. She told me, "Oh, I can see how it is different now." I explained to Katie that although she read the word incorrectly it did not change the meaning of the sentence, and that was important. She agreed. I then asked how she would like to answer question six, she said "The word means like grinded, I know this because I thought this yesterday but it's not the same word." Overall day eight took about 45 minutes.

### **What Went Well**

Katie's ability to respond to the post-reading evaluation questions has improved dramatically. She is able to create complete sentences that restate the question very easily. She is able to communicate her ideas successfully as well. I think that introducing making predictions in these last two post-reading evaluations has been successful even though I

needed to prompt Katie in order to get a more thorough response to the questions. If I continue to work with Katie in the future I plan to increase her ability to create predictions and inferences based on the evidence in the text.

**What I would do differently:**

The main idea question in the post-reading evaluation is really not all that necessary. If I am to work with Katie in the future, I think that I will only prompt her with the creation of the main idea once instead of on two separate activities. To go further with that, I believe that the post-reading evaluations are supportive in my understanding of Katie's within the text, about the text, and beyond the text knowledge, but I think that I am also able to construct this understanding through a conversation format. I would like to work on Katie's writing skills in the future as well, and this may also modify the post-reading evaluations and comprehension conversations.

If I am to meet with Katie in the future, I would like to ask her parents about her long wait time to answer questions, and comprehend complex information. I wonder if this has anything to do with her diagnosis of ADHD. She may need more time to focus in certain situations, or I also thought at times she might have been daydreaming and not actually attending to the information or the activity.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations**

My intention in conducting this study was to research the contributing factors and effectiveness my use of hands-on literacy learning could have on a student with ADHD. I identified and reviewed three specific aspects of literacy learning were identified and reviewed as a notation of success in the area of hands-on literacy activities. These three specific aspects correlated with my three research questions. The first research question was how does the hands-on approach affect a student's motivation during literacy learning?

Intrinsic motivation is one area that was observed and discussed as I believe it to be a determining source of understanding and contribution to the area of literacy. The second research question was how does the hands-on approach affect a student's reading comprehension during literacy learning? I observed and determined the reading comprehension of textual information and Katie's ability to gain knowledge and meaning from the text while reading. The third research question was how does the hands-on approach affect a student's ability to decode during literacy learning? The ability to decode allows the reader to translate the text into graphemes and phonemes that support the comprehension of the textual information by way of defining responsive words and phrases (Cummings, Dewey, Latimer, & Good, 2011). Throughout the four-week research study I observed and recorded all three of these specific aspects of literacy. In this chapter, I will discuss the conclusions and determine possible implications based on my results, along with overall recommendations that can be suggested based on the outcome of my research study.

## **Conclusions**

### **How does the hands-on approach affect a student's motivation during literacy learning?**

#### **The Use of Movement Can Increase the Motivation of a Student With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder**

My first research question was how does the hands-on approach affect a student's motivation during literacy learning? Based on my research and observations, I believe that any type of movement that correlates with a literacy activity can increase intrinsic motivation in a student with ADHD. Intrinsic motivation is necessary to increase a lack of focus and attention given to reading tasks. Volkow et al. (2011) explained through their research that students with ADHD may not only exhibit attention lacking, and/or hyperactive qualities, these students are also likely to lack motivation as a symptom of the disorder. I believe Katie's use of hands-on activities in the form of movement while performing related literacy

assignments contributed to her enthusiasm and success during each literacy activity.

The use of the four separate hands-on literacy activities, the exercise ball, the Post-it notes, the stress ball, and the index cards, created four different responses from Katie. I considered Katie's use of the exercise ball during week one to be successful, because I perceived Katie's sitting on the exercise ball occupied her need for movement. Katie was very excited to be using the exercise ball. She chose to sit on the ball even after the reading. She filled out the graphic organizer while sitting on the exercise ball. The slight movements seemed to occupy her need for action, while still allowing her to focus on the reading of the story. I believe that Katie's use of the exercise ball began as a novelty. She would bounce rigorously and not at a steady pace. Eventually after the first four pages of the text, her movements began to stabilize. Katie was making smaller movements and bouncing slowly. After the continued use of the exercise ball over the two-day time period, Katie realized the supportive ability of the ball. Of the four of the hands-on opportunities I created for her, she seemed to enjoy the use of the exercise ball as both a novelty feature and a continued motivational support the most.

In week two, I asked Katie to read a chapter from a text that I had divided into short sections and printed onto index cards. I asked her to move around the room to read the next index card, and I also asked her to pick out important pieces of information on the index cards using a highlighter. I perceived that Katie enjoyed using the highlighter, and the ability to view the text in smaller chunks. The highlighter was a motivation for Katie, although the actual movement of the activity was minimal, more fine motor rather than gross motor, she was able to use her hands to guide in her understanding of the chapter. I believe Katie was motivated by this task because of the integrated movement into her reading activities and I also think that the highlighter motivated her as well. The highlighter gave her the power to determine what she felt was important and she liked being able to highlight on top of the text.



During the activity Katie said, “I can’t do this in my own books but I would like to.” I asked her why she liked using the highlighter and she said, “I can see the words easy.” I suspect that she meant it was easier to reread the parts she highlighted because the highlighter made them stand out. The use of the highlighter was a clear intrinsic motivator.

In week three, I asked Katie to use a stress ball while reading, *Horrible Harry in Room 2B* by Suzy Kline (1997). I believe that the use of the stress ball was successful. She was able to stay focused while reading, and seemed to enjoy the tactile sensation of holding the stress ball in her hand. At first I thought the stress ball might become a distraction to her because she was tossing it in the air slightly and the ball rolled onto the floor twice, causing Katie to get up to retrieve the ball. As the activity continued I noted her constant squeezing of the ball, while rolling the ball between her fingers. She said that the stress ball reminded her of an eraser that she likes to play with at school. Her teacher allows her to hold the eraser in her hand while in English language arts and math class. The movement in this hands-on activity was small and involved her fine motor skills, but this activity was still able to give Katie minor stimulation, which I believe led to her motivation and focus throughout the activity.

In week four, I had Katie use Post-it notes to write down her thoughts while reading. I asked Katie to stop whenever she felt it necessary, and she would verbalize the information that was important to the text and I would write it on a post-it note. She would then stick this Post-it note on the physical text where the information was taken. Katie was able to create six Post-it notes, and when Katie placed the Post-it notes on the pages in the text she was deliberate in her positioning.

For her first Post-it note, Katie stopped on page 28 and asked me to write, “Harry was mad at Sidney for calling him a canary, and putting a sticker on his chair.” Katie placed the second Post-it note on the bottom of page 28. This note read, “Harry was double mad because

Sidney put a canary sticker on his lunch box.” The third Post-it note was from page 29 in the text. Katie asked me to write, “Harry went to the library.” Katie created her fourth post-it note on the top of page 30, “The librarian gave Harry a book, *Terrible Tyrannosaurus Rex*.” On page 32, Katie asked me to note, “Harry was mad because Sidney put a canary sticker on his book.” Katie placed the fifth Post-it on the top of page 32. On page 33, Katie created her sixth Post-it note. She asked me to write, “Harry squished a banana into Sidney’s hand and he thought it was a slug.” She placed this post-it in the middle of page 33. After reading the text, Katie and I used the Post-it notes to create the graphic organizer (see Figure 4.8). I asked Katie to take the Post-it notes out of the book and place them directly into the boxes in the graphic organizer. I believe that this activity was motivating to Katie because she stayed focused throughout this activity. She seemed to enjoy placing the Post-it notes on the text because she was methodical and took her time when placing the Post-its on the text, and on the graphic organizer. The movement again was significant to her fine motor skills allowing her to make small movements while reading which I believe increased her motivation of the activity.

### **The Length of a Text Used In a Hands-On Activity Can Affect Motivation**

In my research study I used two different texts with my student, Katie. According to the article *Literacy teaching practice: Participation*, in the Australian Journal of Language & Literacy (2005), motivation is necessary to compensate for the lack of focus and attention given to the reading tasks. Attention is crucial to the lasting effects of literacy learning and can be manipulated by the involvement and participation of Katie.

I chose the first text that we used on days one and two of the study. The text I chose was *Amelia Bedelia’s First Day of School* by Herman Parish (2011). I used this text as a base line to determine which other text I could use with her in the proceeding activities. *Amelia*

*Bedelia's First Day of School* has a grade level of preschool – grade 3, determined by the publisher Greenwillow Books. I thought it might be a simple read for Katie. Katie's current independent reading level at the time of the study, based on her Individualized Education Plan (IEP) was grade 3, level N according to the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. I believed that the main idea of the story on grade level with a first or second grade student. My conclusion was based on the nature of the story, and the language used in the story. The story was about Amelia Bedelia's first day of school and all of the new things that she encountered at school, her teacher, new friends, the classroom, recess, lunch, and art class. In *Amelia Bedelia's First Day of School*, there were 32 pages, with each page consisting of 4-5 lines of text. I assumed previously when choosing the text that the complexity of the language was minimal and Katie should have found the text to be an easy read. However, I was surprised with the challenges that she had. When Katie was stuck on a word in the beginning of the story she would look to me for help, rather than decode on her own. She did this for the words, rhymes and hollered. When I asked her to break words apart on her own she was able to do so if prompted. Katie decoded the words, chickadees and flattering, using the breaking apart strategy. When Katie had exactly two pages left in this short story she began showing signs of decreased motivation. She began to slouch on the exercise ball, and she lost her place in the text three separate times. When she lost her place in the text, she said, "Wait, what?" and then attempted to resume her place in the text. This jumbled reading led to some confusion. She did not tell me that she did not enjoy reading this text, but based on her body language and her inability to remember details from the text, I believe that Katie was uninterested in the text. I believe Katie's lack of interest in this text was why her motivation seemed to decrease throughout the first hands-on activity.

The text used for the proceeding lessons was, *Horrible Harry in Room 2B* by Suzy Kline (1997). I gave Katie three options and they were all chapter books. I told her that whatever

book she chose was going to be used throughout the rest of our time together. I infer that she chose *Horrible Harry in Room 2B* for several reasons, this text included pictures on almost every page, used a larger font than the other text options, and the chapters were about ten pages each. I believe that these characteristics appealed to her because the text may have seemed easier than the others, and she seemed to be interested in the character of Harry. I think that Harry was interesting to her because Katie said that she gets in trouble at school too.

Katie's participation increased in lessons two through four, and I think that she was genuinely interested in the text, *Horrible Harry in Room 2B* by Suzy Kline (1997). I have determined that she was more interested in the text because of her ability to recall information from the text for the graphic organizers improved dramatically from lesson one. She was able to fill in the details portion of the graphic organizer with relevant information (see Figure 4.4). I did note that Katie struggled with fluency while reading the text in lessons two through four, but she was still able to demonstrate a good understanding of the text, based on my results from the post-reading evaluations. I also believe that her motivation increased through the use of this text because of her interaction when we reviewed the text. Prior to the post-reading evaluations that she took after each hands-on activity, Katie and I would review the text together. Katie and I skimmed through the text and looked at the pictures to recall important information from the text. Katie would actively look through the pictures and respond to the situations she recalled from the reading. For example, during day two of the research study she recalled on page 7 in *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, "This must be when Harry tickled the other kid and made him say he loves girls." Her interactions were livelier than when we reviewed the previous text and she sustained this level of interest for the text with each of the chapters we read. I believe that her sustained interest level increased her participation in the hands-on activities and this supported her overall motivation in the completion of the literacy tasks.

## **How does the hands-on approach affect a student's reading comprehension?**

### **The Use of Hands-on Activities Can Support Reading Comprehension Through Heightened Focus in a Student With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder**

My second research question was how does the hands-on approach affect a student's reading comprehension during literacy learning? I believe that a student's ability to comprehend complex information while reading is imperative in improving her literacy achievement level. Ghelani et al. describes the correlation between students with ADHD and a reading comprehension deficit. Researchers explained that reading comprehension is a complex task that requires the cohesion of several cognitive processes, which are dependent on a student's ability to attend to specific information (2004). Based on my research and observations of Katie, a student with ADHD, I have decided that using hands-on activities can possibly give students the support to focus their attention on the text. I observed how Katie was able to obtain more specific data and related information.

Throughout each of the four weeks, I changed the hands-on activities, but I kept Katie's post-reading tasks were constant. I asked her to complete a graphic organizer that highlighted the main idea of the text, along with three supporting details. I also asked her to complete four post-reading evaluations, one per week, consisting of six questions each. Her effort, behaviors and completed work enabled me to ascertain her overall understanding of the textual information. I noticed several challenges associated with the post-reading evaluations and these were modified each week. And each week Katie was able to rise to the new challenges. I believe that because of her ability to attend to the text, through the focus given to the variety of hands-on activities, Katie was able to successfully comprehend the text.

### **The Use of Hands-on Literacy Activities Can Positively Influence a Student with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Her Working Memory of a Text**

Elosua et al. (2013) explain that memory is an important component of basic reading comprehension. Researchers also determined that scaffolding to support working memory can be achieved through the use of graphic organizers and note-taking strategies that encourage the summarization and determining of the main idea of a text. After each lesson I asked Katie to complete a graphic organizer that highlighted the main idea of the text, along with three supporting details (see Figures: 4.1, 4.4, 4.6, & 4.8). As the research study progressed, Katie was able to use the graphic organizer more effectively with each lesson. I believe that her ability to complete the organizer more successfully was due in part to the increase in her working memory of the text, and also her comfort level with the written activity.

In the first lesson we used the text, *Amelia Bedelia's First Day of School*, by Herman Parish (2011). After reading the text I asked Katie to complete the corresponding graphic organizer (Figure 4.1). I explained to her that it was important to understand the main idea of a text, I said "The main idea is what the story is mostly about." Once she determined the main idea I also asked her to create three supporting details, and list them on the graphic organizer as well. She wrote in the main idea box that, "It was Amelia Bedelia's first day of school". The first detail was, "Amelia Bedelia was so excited to go to school." The second detail was, "Amelia Bedelia was learning a lot of new stuff and made new friends too and made new projects too." The last detail was, "Amelia Bedelia has fun at her first day of school and she found out other people had their first day too." I felt that her organizer was not as detailed as I would have liked and did not seem to be supportive for her reading comprehension. Katie said "I couldn't remember everything so I wrote like sort of what I remembered. That's what I do in school too cause I don't always remember everything, you know." I responded, "It's important to included specific details from the story, that way when we look back at the graphic organizer next time, it will refresh our memory of the story.

And it helps me understand your thinking better if you write a little bit more. Is there anything else you can think of adding to the graphic organizer?" Katie responded, "No."

Katie was unable to recall specific details of the text, and she did not choose to elaborate on her explanations of the main idea and supporting details.

In the next hands-on activity, Katie was able to give more specific details in her graphic organizer, which demonstrated the increase in her working memory of the text. In Figure 4.4 Katie completed the main idea and supporting details of her chapter one reading in the text, *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997). Katie wrote in the main idea box, "Harry is horrible Harry get's into trouble." In the first detail box Katie wrote, "Sidney called Harry a name and Harry wanted to get revenge so he tickled him and made him say I love girls, I love girls." In the second detail box Katie wrote, "Song Lee was having a b-day at her school and Miss Mackle picked 2 people to take a plate of goodies to the librarian and Harry and Doug made a promise not to tell anyone about eating the cupcake." In the third detail box, Katie wrote, "Harry was doing a writing piece so he made it up but no one knew but Doug did he said Harry did not go to sea or meet a mermaid and eat a sea turtle Harry is Doug's best friend." This second graphic organizer was much more detailed. I believe she was able to demonstrate a better working memory of the text due in part to her increased reading comprehension.

The third lesson I asked Katie to state her ideas orally as I wrote them down on the graphic organizer for her (Figure 4.6). She seemed to create more formulated and calculated responses when she was only required to worry about expressing her ideas, instead of writing the ideas down and concentrating her efforts on spelling correctly. Katie decided the main idea in chapter two was, "Harry was trying to invade the classroom with the stub people, and he tried to scare the class with his snake costume." Her first detail was, "Horrible Harry was trying to invade the classroom but it did not work, no one screamed." Her second detail was,

“Harry put his stub people on Miss Mackle’s desk, she thought they were cute.” Her third detail was, “Harry was late to school because he was working on his costume, and everyone screamed.” I think that Katie was able to understand the chapter very well and the graphic organizer demonstrates the increase in her working memory. She also seemed to recall more information when she was not required to write the information herself, and rather expressed the chapter verbally.

The last lesson that Katie completed demonstrates a very successful completion of the graphic organizer. I was very impressed with her abilities in this final lesson and I believe that the hands-on activity increased her working memory, along with her positive experience with the written activity. For this lesson, Katie read chapter three in the text *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997). She verbalized to me notations that she would like me to write down on Post-it notes. After completing the chapter Katie organized the Post-it notes on to the graphic organizer template. She also added a detail to the graphic organizer that was not on the Post-it notes (Figure 4.8). Katie thought the main idea of his chapter was, “Harry was very angry with Sidney for sticking canary stickers on things, but he got revenge.” In the first detail box Katie placed Post-it notes 1, and 2. Post-it note 1: Harry was mad at Sidney for calling him a canary, and putting a sticker on his chair. Post-it note 2: Harry was double mad because Sidney put a canary sticker on his lunch box. In the second detail box she added post-it notes 3, 4 and 5. Post-it note 3: Harry went to the library. Post-it note 4: The librarian gave Harry a book. Post-it note 5: Harry was mad because Sidney put a canary sticker on his book. Katie placed post-it note 6 in the last box. Post-it note 6: Harry squished a banana into Sidney’s hand and he thought it was a slug. She decided that we should add, “Harry got revenge,” on top of the Post-it note as well. Katie created the graphic organizer very thoughtfully in this last lesson. I think that she made good choices based on the Post-it note placement, and she created a great overview of chapter three.



Katie's ability to use the graphic organizer to effectively organize the important information taken from this chapter increased throughout each lesson. Her working memory improved as she was able to recall more specific information, and summarize key points. I believe that the hands-on activity was supportive in her comprehension, and supported her ability to complete these written assignments.

### **How does the hands-on approach affect a student's ability to decode during literacy learning?**

#### **Increasing a Student's Ability to Decode Textual Information May Require Further Implementation of Strategies, Separate from The Hands-On Activity**

My third research question was how does the hands-on approach affect a student's ability to decode during literacy learning? I believe that the ability to decode words while reading can be a significant struggle for students with ADHD. The improving the decoding skill is imperative to the overall goal of improved literacy learning. Decoding text enables the reader to translate the text into graphemes and phonemes that support the comprehension of the textual information by way of defining responsive words and phrases (Cummings, Dewey, Latimer, & Good, 2011). I created hands-on activities that were intended to enable Katie to develop her decoding abilities through hands-on interaction and physical stimulation.

I observed that Katie was able to succeed in the areas of intrinsic motivation and reading comprehension however, her ability to decode what she was reading was not positively or negatively affected through the hands-on activities. With some reflection and reformatting after week one of the research study, I concluded that an outside source for decoding support would be necessary for Katie because she was struggling with decoding a good portion of the text, and on several occasions asked for my assistance prior to attempting to decode a word from the text on her own.

I decided to use a poster with eight decoding strategies presented in picture form as a support. The poster had eight decoding strategies and eight corresponding pictures for her to use as a support (see Figure 4.3). The first strategy was to skip a tricky word in a sentence and go back. The second strategy was to look at the picture. The third strategy was to go back and reread. The fourth strategy was thinking what would make sense. The sixth strategy was to look for chunks. The seventh strategy was to get your mouth ready for the first sounds. The last strategy was to slide through the whole word. Katie and I discussed each strategy and we hung the poster up on her wall so she could see it while we worked together. I also told her that she does not need to use all of the decoding strategies; only whichever ones make sense in a particular situation.

This extra support seemed to be more beneficial to her overall decoding abilities, than the actual hands-on activity. In day three of the research study Katie was reading *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997). On page 6 in this text, Katie struggled with the word revenge. She paused before she read the word and said, “re-rev-rummage”. I asked her if that made sense, and Katie responded, “not really but I don’t know.” I asked her to reread the sentence and think about what would make sense instead. She reread the sentence three times and was able to successfully decode the word as “revenge”. She used three decoding strategies in this example. Katie was able to understand through this interaction that we need to try some strategies before we find one that works. On day five of the research study, Katie was continuing to read *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997). During this reading, on page 15, Katie struggled with the word, “invasion”. She used the decoding strategy of breaking the word into chunks. She said “in-vade... in-vadon... invasion.” I was pleased with her ability to correctly identify and decode this word unassisted. It did not seem to even disturb her reading pace too much. I believe that introducing the decoding strategies poster as an extra support for Katie was beneficial to her comprehension of the text.

## **The Length Of The Text Used in a Hands-on Activity Can Affect Decoding Ability and Overall Comprehension**

Throughout the research study I modified the length of the passage that Katie was required to read. Ghelani et al. stated in their research that the reading comprehension of students with ADHD declined as the length of the passage increased (2004). I observed that Katie seemed to lose interest in the text from lesson one, and I allowed Katie to chose the text for the remainder of the lessons.

In lesson one Katie read the text, *Amelia Bedelia's First Day of School* by Herman Parish (2011). This text was 32 pages in length. I observed that as Katie was reading this passage that she seemed to become disinterested towards the end of the chapter and this affected her decoding ability. When Katie had two pages left in this story she began to slouch on the exercise ball, and she lost her place in the text three separate times. This jumbled reading led to some confusion. Some of the words she struggled with in this text were, grown-up, O'Malley, laughing, whole, hollered and rhymes. When she was stuck on a word she would look to me for help, rather than decode on her own. When I asked her to break words apart on her own she was able to do so if prompted. Katie decoded the words, chickadees and flattering, through this strategy. I believe that the length of this text had a negative effect on her reading comprehension and I decided to use a different text for the proceeding lessons.

In lessons two through four Katie read the text, *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997). This text included pictures, used a larger font, and the chapters were only about 10 pages each. I noticed that Katie was able to focus her attention on the text consistently as she read through the reading passages from this text. In the last three lessons Katie was able to provide more information on the graphic organizer. She was also more detailed and specific in her answers in the post-reading evaluations. Lastly, Katie was able to use the

decoding strategies that we discussed together more frequently and on her own. I believe that the shorter passages supported her ability to use the decoding strategies and her reading comprehension of the text.

### **Implications for Student Learning**

#### **Students With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Can Benefit From Hands-on Activities During Literacy Learning**

During each week of my research study I asked Katie to complete a different hands-on activity involving a literacy task. The physical activity in hands-on activities supports the executive functioning of the student (Gapin, & Etneir, 2010). Each hands-on activity yielded different results that were positive to her overall understanding of the textual information. The hands-on activities I created for her stimulated Katie's need for movement through fine motor and gross motor directed activities, while increasing her focus on the literacy tasks at hand.

The four different hands-on activities ranged from small to large movements, using fine motor and gross motor skills. For each lesson, Katie was explained the specifics of the activity and the tasks she was to perform. She found the most amount of enjoyment in the use of the exercise ball from week one. I ascertained this from her positive responses, and her request to use the exercise ball in the future. I believe that the stimulation given to Katie from the large movements created from bouncing on the exercise ball increased her motivation to complete the literacy task. The use of the ball also improved the amount of focus and attention given to the text. The activities involving her fine motor skills were also successful for Katie. She held onto a stress ball while reading in week three as the hands-on task. Katie stated that her teacher in school allows her to hold on to an eraser during reading assignments, and that the stress ball use was a similar task. Using a variety of hands-on activities enabled me to observe Katie in various situations and compare and contrast the outcomes of each

activity. Overall the hands-on activities using fine motor and gross motor skills were successful for this student.

### **Students With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Can Benefit From Post-Reading Conversations About the Text**

According to VanDeWeghe (2007), “In the dialogue about the text, the “teacher” summarizes the content, clarifies, and predicts. The dialogic process of conversations allows for the adult teacher to model comprehension activities such as summarizing, locating main ideas, speculating about character, noticing plot developments, and so forth; over time, students learn these strategies through exposure, practice, and feedback, and the adult teacher is able to monitor the students’ developing understanding of the text as well as the students developing expertise as readers” (p. 86). I designed four post-reading evaluations as a comprehension and decoding assessment for my Katie. The evaluations were intended to focus on the reading passages that were read each week, following the schedule of one passage per week. These evaluations included multiple-choice and short response questions. Evaluations were limited to six questions each. I chose the six questions specifically to highlight Katie’s ability to comprehend the reading passages, along with her ability to decode specific words from the passage used to support the meaning of the text. The evaluations varied each week, depending on the information in the reading passage. Katie’s ability to complete the post-reading evaluations guided my analysis. I determined the efficacy of the hands-on reading activities, and answered my research study questions by analyzing her answers.

Although my post-reading evaluations were minimal in question length, Katie and I were involved in supportive conversations surrounding each question. It was not my original intention to discuss each of the post-reading evaluation questions, but it turned out to be a positive experience for both of us. With the succession of each of the evaluations, I noticed

that Katie was able to create longer and more in-depth responses to each question. She seemed to really enjoy the open-ended conversations and tried her best to respond in a thoughtful manner. Katie often took an extended amount of time to complete her answers to the questions, and required a lot of think time. Some of the questions took her about five minutes to think about silently as she looked back through the text and her graphic organizers. Even after the initial five minutes to think about her responses, Katie would ask questions if she was still unable to answer the question. Although she took her time with her responses, I noticed that her ability to comprehend and respond to complex comprehension questions seemed to improve throughout our four week time period together.

**Students With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Must Be Observed in a Variety of Activities to Accurately Determine Their Strengths and Weaknesses in Literacy Learning and Modify Literacy Learning Opportunities Accordingly**

Katie was involved in four different types of hands-on activities, along with her two different types of writing assignments. Each activities yielded different results and levels of successfulness. During some activities, I noticed that Katie was extremely attentive and was able to increase her comprehension abilities, while in other situations she seemed unable to focus and comprehend as effectively.

In week one, I had Katie read a book while sitting on the exercise ball. I then asked her to complete a graphic organizer with the main idea of the book, and three supporting details. Although I chose this text because it was below her current independent reading level, based on her Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the length of the text was not conducive to her limited ability to attend to reading a text over an extended period of time. I noted this weakness in my observations, and for the three following lessons I chose shorter amounts of text. The graphic organizer also needed to be revised because of Katie's limited ability to create a sufficient amount of detail in her responses. During week one, I noted how

she created thoughtfully complex responses to the comprehension questions in the post-reading evaluations. For example, the third question in the post-reading evaluation in week one asked Katie to make an inference about the text. ‘List one part in the story where Amelia did something different than what she was expected to do. *Why* do you think she did this?’ At first Katie responded, “That happened a lot.” I told Katie to choose only one part in the story, and then to explain why she thinks the character Amelia responded in that way. She responded, “When the teacher wanted the kids to say “here” when she called their names, Amelia Bedelia said, “what.” I think she did that because when people say your name they say what sometimes.” I felt that this response was supportive in her understanding of the character, and she made a fair inference about the characters response to her teacher. After reflecting on this I decided to challenge her by increasing the level of difficulty in the questions.

In week two I asked Katie to read a chapter from a text that I had divided into short sections and printed on index cards. She used a highlighter to highlight important details from each card. I then asked her to complete the graphic organizer again. This week I wrote underneath some of her words, if the words were illegibly written. The smaller amount of text seemed to be more easily understood by Katie. She was able to comprehend at a greater level because the text was in smaller chunks. The act of highlighting was also supportive in her comprehension. During the completion of the post-reading questions, Katie was able to demonstrate a greater understanding of the text, and was also able to structure the responses of her questions when asked to use complete sentences in her answers. For example, in the third question on the second post-reading evaluation I asked Katie to make an inference about the text. ‘Why do you think Harry likes to cause trouble?’ I asked Katie if she knew how to restate the question into her answer. I explained that when we are responding to questions about a text it is important to use complete sentences. I said that part of creating a complete

sentence is by using part of the question to begin our answer. Katie seemed to understand what restating the question meant but she said that in school they call it, “taking the question word out.” Her response to this question was, “Harry likes to cause trouble because it is what he does, sometimes he gets busted and sometimes he doesn’t.” I felt that this response was accurate according to the storyline.

During weeks three and four I noticed that Katie seemed less motivated to complete the writing tasks associated with each lesson. The graphic organizers and post-reading evaluations were verbally dictated by her and her understanding and comprehension, however I did the actual writing of the answers and notations. The weaknesses that I noticed in her writing were not addressed in this research study, but they were noted in my observations and reflections. I felt that her strength in oral responses made up for her needs in writing. I took on the role of scribe to give Katie time to formulate a complex comprehension related response.

Reflecting of my observations from each lesson created a positive effect, as I was able to modify the lessons to coincide with Katie’s strengths and weaknesses. I was also able to gain more insight into her motivation, comprehension, and word-decoding abilities. The range of activities I asked her to perform enabled me to have a greater understanding of her as a unique literacy learner. I believe I am now more equipped to respond accurately to her overall literacy learning abilities because of the range of literacy learning opportunities I was able to provide during each lesson.

### **Implications for My Teaching**

#### **My Reflections Enabled Me to Develop More Effective Literacy Instruction**

Throughout this four-week research study, I made it a priority to review the effectiveness of the lesson after the activity each week. During this review process, I



reflected on the overall effectiveness of the activity in relation to my three research ideas: motivation, comprehension, and word decoding. I also read through my field observation notes, and added extra notations if I remembered more details afterwards. I then made a plan for the next lesson based on my understanding Katie's successes and challenges from the previous day. While completing these steps in my reflection process I felt it was important to acknowledge and understand Katie's strengths and weaknesses from each lesson, and adjust my levels of support based on this understanding.

I felt that it was beneficial for Katie that I make the necessary modifications in order to attend to her strengths and needs in literacy. Some modifications that developed through my reflection process were the changes to the graphic organizer procedure, reducing the amount of text I asked Katie to read, and the questions I asked during the post-reading evaluation.

I believe that the graphic organizer was a necessary adjustment in order to allow Katie to develop a greater understanding of the main idea and supporting details. Katie's most successful contribution from the graphic organizer was in week four. During this week, I asked Katie to write important information from the text onto Post-it notes, and after reading the required chapter, she organized the Post-it notes onto the graphic organizer template.

In the future, I believe I will continue to use this type of notation strategy with Katie. From my reflections, I also gathered that Katie was unable to attend to large amounts of text at one time. In week two, I asked her to choose from a small pre-selected group of chapter books that each consisted of short 10-12 page chapters. I gained my most important understandings of Katie's abilities during the post-reading evaluations and the discussions that Katie and I had with her during this time. I was able to develop a much stronger understanding of her ability to comprehend the text, and through modifications I was able to help her improve upon her strengths and weaknesses in the area of comprehension.

## **The Use of Movement in Literacy Activities May be Successful for All Students**

Throughout my four-week research study, I observed Katie during four different hands-on literacy activities. In each activity I asked her to complete a literacy task while also incorporating some type of fine motor movement. From my observations of Katie, and my understanding of her motivation and comprehension, I have determined that incorporating movement into literacy activities can be successful. Gapin and Etneir (2010), discovered that an increase in executive functioning is found among students with ADHD that participated in physical activity. Based on this understanding and my research, I believe that students without ADHD could improve upon their literacy skills through the integration of movement into their literacy learning opportunities.

In week one I had Katie sit on an exercise ball while reading, and completing her written assignments. This activity was Katie's favorite and she thoroughly enjoyed the use of the exercise ball. As I observed her use of the exercise ball I noticed that she was able to focus on the reading and writing tasks, and she was motivated to complete the assignments.

I believe that other students may feel similarly if given the opportunity to sit on an exercise ball while completing a literacy-related task. It may be necessary to monitor the interactions with the exercise ball as to not allow it to become a distraction for the student.

In week two I asked Katie to read a chapter from a text that I had divided into short sections and printed on index cards. I did this because I wanted to chunk the text into smaller amounts to aid her ability to comprehend what she was reading. I also asked her to move around the room each time she finished reading a card and was ready for the next card. I asked Katie to highlight the important information from each index card as well. I recognized that this type of hands-on activity was successful for Katie. She was able to comprehend the

new information from the text, and was able to successfully highlight the important information.

I believe that this type of activity would be fairly easy to use with all students. As the teacher, I would need to chunk the text based on the amount of text that would be manageable for my students. I would then invite them to highlight important information from each chunk. The movement of the students involved in the activity could be increased or even more limited depending on my expectations given to the students. I think that this activity could be used successfully in any type of literacy classroom environment.

In week three, I asked Katie to hold onto a stress ball as she read chapter two of *Horrible Harry in Room 2B*, by Suzy Kline (1997). She would toss the stress ball to me when she found a piece of important information to write down. The action of Katie tossing the ball and pausing to think about the main idea of the chapter would enable her to read the text in smaller amounts. When I completed this activity with Katie, I wrote down the information for her instead of asking her to write. If I was to use this type of hands-on activity with all different students I would most likely ask them to set the ball down, or toss it into a basket, before making their notes. Some students might find the added movement to be a distraction to their own learning, and this is something that I would need to carefully observe. Not all students would need the stress ball as an added tactile sensation while reading. I think that this activity could be successful for all students if modified to fit their strengths and weaknesses. For instance, students that do not need the stress ball to hold on to while reading could simply be given another item to move when they found a detail that was important to the text. I could give these students several marbles to move into a cup every time they found a piece of important information in the text. The action of moving the marbles and pausing to write down the information would break up the text into manageable pieces determined by the students themselves.

In week four I asked Katie to write down important information from the chapter onto Post-it notes and placed them into the chapter where she found the information. She later completed a graphic organizer by organizing the Post-it notes onto the chart, and adding some extra notations as needed.

I believe this hands-on activity could be very effective for all students. I was very pleased with the outcome of this assignment, I felt that Katie's ability to comprehend the textual information greatly improved from the act of note taking and then organizing the notes onto a chart. She was able to analyze the information on a deeper level and I believe that all students could benefit from that type of extra analysis.

### **The Use of Discussions After Reading Can be Supportive in the Solidification of the Textual Information**

The post-reading evaluations that I created for Katie were supportive in her overall comprehension of the text. Each post-reading evaluations consisted of six questions. I designed them to assess the Katie's comprehension of the text, along with her ability to decode certain words from the text.

To create the post-reading evaluations I used the text, *When Readers Struggle: Teaching that Works* by Fountas and Pinnell (2009). Specifically, information from chapter 17, "Teaching for Comprehending: Thinking Before, During, and After Reading" was supportive in my development of the comprehension assessment. In this chapter, Fountas and Pinnell divide reading comprehension into three areas; thinking within the text, thinking beyond the text, and thinking about the text. According to Fountas and Pinnell, a reader must be able to attend to all of these types of thinking to fully understand the meaning of the text.

As I developed the six questions for each of the post-reading evaluations I was certain to introduce questions involving word solving, and summarizing to support Katie's within the text knowledge. I also created questions to encourage Katie to make inferences about the text,

to support Katie's thinking beyond the text. I also created questions that I thought would prompt Katie to analyze the text, to support her thinking about the text.

I felt that the post-reading evaluations were well developed, and I used my observation notes from the previous lesson to configure each question. After the first post-reading evaluation on day two of the research study, I quickly realized that the post-reading questions became a necessary guide for discussion. Not only did Katie and I discuss the formulation of the response for each question, we also had in-depth conversations about certain decoding skills, and how to make an inference based on the textual information. I was really able to understand more about what Katie was doing as she read. This information was extremely helpful in my preparation for future lessons, and for the next post-reading evaluation. Katie gave most of her responses orally because I felt that asking her to take time to write down her thoughts would be excessively time consuming, and take her off track of the question.

Though I was not intending to create a discussion after each part of the text, I recognized that the post-reading evaluation gave us the opportunity to solidify the information from the text, and even encouraged Katie to dig deeper into the next part of the reading. Discussions after reading were extremely important for Katie's understanding of the text, and for me to be able to gain insight into her thoughts and questions about the text.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

#### **Researching the Use of the Exercise Ball in Literacy Learning Over an Extended Period of Time May Supply More Specific Data and Conclusions**

For my four-week research study, I created and observed four different types of hands-on activities for Katie. Each hands-on activity was unique and included a specific literacy-related task. Although I found it interesting to observe Katie in different types of hands-on experiences, I believe that the findings from my research study could be more

conclusive if I only chose one type of hands-on experience and used the same activity each week.

In week one I asked Katie to sit on an exercise ball as she completed a reading, a graphic organizer, and the post-reading evaluation. I suspect that this type of hands-on activity satisfied Katie's need for movement, and she was able to hold her focus for an extended period of time while on the ball.

If I was to delve into further research it might be enlightening to discover what, if any, effects the exercise ball has on students' abilities to focus when used over time in literacy-related activities. Using the exercise ball consistently over time may have extended my understanding of the positive or negative effects.

The same can be said for each of the different activities. I also believe I might have gained a better understanding of the motivation surrounding each activity if Katie was observed performing the same hands-on activity for each of the four weeks.

### **Smaller Amounts of Text Could Improve the Validity of the Analysis Information**

I noticed that Katie was unable to attend to the text and focus when I gave her a longer text. During week one of the research study, Katie read, *Amelia Bedelia's First Day of School* by Herman Parish (2011). This text had a grade level of preschool – grade 3, determined by the publisher Greenwillow Books. Katie's current independent reading level determined by her reading teacher was grade 3, level N according to Fountas and Pinnell. This text had 32 pages, with each page consisting of 4-5 lines of text. I determined that this book was too long for Katie, as she seemed to become frustrated towards the end of the book. I noted Katie's slouching posture and her increasing miscues as she continued. For Katie, smaller amounts of text or shorter books that are more developmentally appropriate given her needs. This may be similar for other students.

I noticed that Katie was able to attend to the text with more of a sense of focus when I gave her smaller amounts of the text. In weeks two, three, and four, the text that Katie was asked to read was much shorter than the text from week one. The chapter book used in weeks two through four was, *Horrible Harry in Room 2B* by Suzy Kline (1997). This text included pictures on almost every page, used a large font size, and the chapters were about ten pages each. Katie showed improvement in her comprehension of this new text, and she did not demonstrate frustrated behaviors while reading. Given the short duration of my experiment and the temperament of my student, Katie, I believe that shorter texts can provide a more accurate understanding of a student's literacy abilities, and long as the research includes several readings overtime.

### **Creating a More Concise and Consistent Format for Literacy Activities Could Provide More Specific Data and Conclusions**

During my research study I asked Katie to complete a series of tasks for each of the four hands-on literacy activities. In week one Katie sat on the exercise ball while she read the given text, she then regurgitated the important information onto a graphic organizer containing a place for the main idea and three boxes for her to fill in supporting details from the text. Katie was also asked to complete a post-reading evaluation, a six-question quiz based on the information from the text. For each of the proceeding weeks, a similar format ensued. Katie was asked to complete the graphic organizer immediately after every reading, and then the following day that week Katie and I would complete the post-reading evaluation.

Although I do feel that I was able to create a large amount of data given the extra assignments that I required from Katie, I believe it may be more effective to limit the amount of paperwork required of the student, and rely more on my observation notes and conversations about the text. For example, a researcher could create a lesson in which the student is only required to complete one piece of writing each day. The student could be

asked to write in a journal after each reading. The researcher would want to delineate a specific format for each entry. I would suggest asking the student to summarize the text that was read. As another form of data the researcher could tape-record the conversations that the teacher and student had about the text. This format has less steps and paperwork associated with the activities that may increase the student's motivation, while also enabling a deeper understanding of the student's abilities for the teacher. Creating a conversation after the reading can be informal and tape recording the dialogue will allow a more in-depth analysis of the student's comprehension. The "give-and-take" conversation with the teacher and the student is successful in many ways. Once students are able to become more competent in their comprehension abilities the teacher can expand the conversation and challenge them more intensely (VanDeWeghe, p. 87-88, 2007). With a limited list of tasks for the student to complete, the researcher may be able to target more specific conclusions about the student. The use of the tape recorder and journal would eliminate the extra paperwork and allow the researcher to be more concise in the analysis of the data.

### **Final Thoughts**

As Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a common diagnosis in schools, almost five percent of the student population experience difficulty in sustained attention. (Identifying and Treating Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Resource for School and Home, 2003). Students experiencing hyperactivity and impulsivity, along with students lacking in sustained attention, are all considered under the diagnosis of ADHD. I believe that it is important to gain insight into the students' minds to understand more about their strengths and needs, and how I can support their literary growth. I created my research study because it is an important topic of study due to the large amounts of students dealing with this condition. I chose to investigate the use of hands-on literacy strategies to create a more engaging



literacy experience for one student with ADHD. I anticipate that the opportunity to research this topic will enable me to support my future students and enhance my teaching capabilities immensely.

I analyzed the Katie's motivation, reading comprehension, and decoding ability, throughout each activity during our four weeks together. Each area depicted by the respective research questions gave a better understanding in the use of the hands-on approach in literacy learning. The subject of the research study is a student with ADHD, and her success in hands-on learning activities in relation to the components of motivation, comprehension, and decoding. I analyzed and correlated the results to determine actual significance and impact related to the schema of literacy intervention.

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## **Appendix A: Parental Permission Form**

### **STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT**

The purpose of this project is identifying the effectiveness of the hands-on approach to literacy learning for students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Three areas will be studied including motivation, reading comprehension, and decoding ability. This research project is also being conducted in order for me to complete my master's thesis for the Department of Education at the College at Brockport, SUNY.

In order for your child to participate in this study, your informed consent is required. You are being asked to make a decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in the project. If you want your child to participate in the project, and agree with the statements below, please sign your name in the space provided at the end, and have your child sign their name. You may change your mind at any time and leave the study without penalty, even after the study has begun.

I understand that:

1. My child's participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse their participation in any and all activities.
2. My child's confidentiality is guaranteed. Their name will not be written on the survey. There will be no way to connect him/her to the answers to the post reading evaluations. If any publication results from this research, my child would not be identified by name.

3. There will be no anticipated personal risks or benefits because of my child's participation in this project.
4. My child's participation comprises of active involvement in 8 brief hands-on reading sessions, and the completion of post reading evaluation of 10 questions and answering those questions in writing. It is estimated that it will take 45-60 minutes to complete each session.
5. The results of this study will be used for the completion of a master's thesis by the primary researcher.
6. Data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet by the investigator. Data and consent forms will be destroyed by shredding when the research has been accepted and approved.

I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the study realizing I may withdraw without penalty at any time during the survey process. Returning the survey (and/or completing interview if appropriate) indicates my consent to participate.

If you have any questions you may contact:

Primary researcher	Faculty Advisor
Katrina	Dong Shin-Shin
(518) 879-1845	(585) 395-2205
Kdurn1@u.brockport.edu	dshin@brockport.edu

**Parent of Participant Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_